

Acts 1: Lesson Ten, Corinthians, Part 4 2 Corinthians 8 - 13

Subject: Paul concluded 2 Corinthians with encouragement to give generously and a defense of his apostolic ministry.

Main Idea: Spiritual growth occurs as we recognize the vast extent of God's grace and work out its implications in our lives.

Principles:

1. *Christians view giving as a privilege, in light of God's gracious and lavish gifts to us.*
2. *When we seek God's glory and not our own, hardships become opportunities to experience and grow in God's grace.*

Introduction

One of the first words many toddlers use is "more." It has been more than thirty years since my children were that age, yet I can still envision tiny fingers outstretched for another bite of something delicious and the repeated plea, "More! More! More!" It is a picture of the way most people go through life. One thing or another offers temporary satisfaction, and then the longing for something more returns.

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul made the statement that God's grace is sufficient. Grace is giving someone something completely undeserved. God is gracious and all people benefit from His grace. For example, by God's grace not only is all life sustained but we also receive things that simply make life more enjoyable (a colorful rainbow, the warmth of sand under our feet, the pleasure of a child's smile). God's most generous gift of grace was His one and only Son. He gave His best when we were at our worst. By grace, we who have received Him not only have had the penalty of our sins paid but also sin's power over us progressively defeated. Even in our deepest suffering, God showers us with unmerited favor.

Paul wanted the Corinthians to recognize, appreciate, and respond to God's grace. For our part, spiritual growth occurs as we recognize the vast extent of God's grace and work out its implications in our lives. Those who do not recognize God's grace and work out its implications live frustrated and discontent, never satisfied for long, always craving something more.

In the last lesson, we learned that false teachers had discredited Paul's ministry to the Corinthians. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians in part to express his relief over the positive response of the majority of the church to a harsh, disciplinary letter he had written them (a letter that has since been lost). But he also wrote to defend his ministry and call to obedience the Corinthian minority who had fallen prey to the "deceitful workers" (11:13). These false apostles had called Paul's reputation, authority, and message into question. In chapters 8-9, Paul wrote to the obedient majority about the grace of giving. In these two chapters, the word grace appears repeatedly. In chapters 10-13, Paul defended his ministry to the false teachers and those they had influenced by providing proofs of God's grace in his own life.

I. Paul's Encouragement to Generous Giving – 2 Corinthians 8-9

A. Background

- i. The Jerusalem Relief Project: At the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), the churches of the diaspora had been urged to remember the poor in Jerusalem (Galatians 2:10). Not only had the Judeans been hit by a series of famines (AD 41-54 [Acts 11:28]), the Jews made life so difficult for Christian converts (Acts 8:1) that it is likely they had trouble remaining in Judea and earning a living. Although Paul's ministry was primarily to Gentiles, he was a Jew himself and never forgot about the plight of his fellow Jews. Jewish believers often had trouble accepting Gentiles as their brothers and sisters in Christ. There was no better way for the Gentile believers to prove their oneness than to help meet their needs. Acts 11:29-30 tells of Barnabas and Paul bringing such a gift from the church at Antioch. Wherever Paul evangelized he had encouraged this giving and many had responded enthusiastically. In the final months of his third missionary journey, he looped through Macedonia and Achaia collecting another love offering for the Jerusalem relief project (Acts 19:21; Romans 15:25-26). The Corinthians had been among the first to enthusiastically pledge a gift.
- ii. The Role of Titus: In chapter 8, Paul referred to Titus four times. In the preceding chapter, he explained that Titus had just arrived in Macedonia with comforting news of the positive response of the majority of the Corinthians to Paul's severe letter (see also 7:13). Chapter 8 reveals that Paul had sent Titus in part because the Corinthians' interest in the Jerusalem relief fund had waned, possibly due to the arrival and teachings of false apostles. It seems these men suggested Paul was using a portion of the funds for his own support. The possibility of such accusations was probably what kept Paul from accepting support from the churches he founded (with the exception of Philippi). Titus had been dispatched to reignite the Corinthians' passion to give and ensure they kept their pledge.

B. Examples of Gracious Givers – 8:1-15

i. The Macedonian Believers – 8:1-7

1. *Grace and the Macedonians*: Paul held up the Macedonian believers (Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea) as examples of gracious giving. In 8:1, he said that they gave because of God's grace. Generous giving is "a visible sign of an invisible grace."ⁱ It is both a gift of God's grace (Romans 12:8) and a response to His grace. Paul asked the Corinthians to consider whether there was evidence that God's grace was in fact being poured out on them.

2. *Generosity Despite Poverty*: The Macedonian believers were undergoing a severe trial that impoverished them. The persecution they suffered may have matched that in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they gave even beyond their ability, not merely because of the urgency of the need, but also because they had first given themselves to the Lord. Stinginess is an indication that a part of our lives has not been completely submitted to Him. Those who have submitted fully to Christ's lordship will naturally be generous.
 3. *Corinthians Urged to Complete Their Gift of Grace*: In 1 Corinthians, Paul chastised the Corinthians' pride in spiritual gifts. In 2 Corinthians 8:7, Paul brought up this issue again, saying that if they truly excelled in spiritual gifts, they would also excel in the grace of giving. They needed to follow through on their commitment and bring this act of grace to completion.
- ii. God's Gift of Jesus – 8:8-15
1. *Jesus Gave Himself*: Paul tested the Corinthians' sincerity by comparing it with the generosity of the Lord Jesus, who though He was rich, graciously impoverished Himself for their sake by leaving heaven and entering the world as a human baby. If the Corinthians indeed knew God's grace toward them, wouldn't they make sacrifices on behalf of others? How much did Christ's sacrifice mean to them?
 2. *A Second Call to Completion*: A second time, Paul called them to bring what they had begun to completion (8:10-11). While the Macedonians had severely increased their financial strain by giving as generously as they had, Paul did not urge the Corinthians to give beyond their means. He expected them to give above and beyond what was convenient but not to go into debt. His goal was equality – not that every believer had exactly the same resources but that those with plenty should give to those in need. As an example of this, Paul cited the collection of manna by the Israelites in the days of their wilderness wandering. God told them to gather one omer per person (Exodus 16:16-18). In this way, each family had just what they needed. Commenting on this verse, John Calvin wrote, "We are not to imagine that the way to grow rich is to make provision for our own distant future and defraud our poor brethren of the help that is their due." One should not hoard while another starves.ⁱⁱ

C. Arrangements for Giving – 8:16-9:5

- i. Titus and the Brothers – 8:16-24: Although Titus had just left Corinth to meet Paul in Macedonia, Paul explained that Titus was returning with two unnamed brothers to facilitate the gathering of the funds (surely Titus carried 2 Corinthians with him). One of the brothers (possibly both) had been chosen to represent their home churches in carrying the funds to Jerusalem. The presence of emissaries proved that Paul had no intention of keeping any part of the money for his own benefit. He took pains to do what was right in the eyes of the Lord and also in the eyes of man (8:21).
- ii. Avoiding Embarrassment – 9:1-5: For a third time, Paul urged the Corinthians to follow through on their commitment. He had boasted to the Macedonians about the Corinthians' seemingly sincere pledge and he didn't want them to be unprepared and embarrassed when the church representatives arrived. They needed to set money aside so they wouldn't end up giving grudgingly from their living expenses in order to follow through on their pledge.

D. Principles of Giving – 9:6-15: In the remaining verses of chapter 9, Paul stated several principles of giving.

- i. Sowing and Reaping – 9:6, 8-9: If we give generously, God will reward us generously. The sowing of seed and the reaping of a harvest illustrate this principle. If we give little, we should expect little reward. God's rewards may be material or they may be spiritual, but since He is the ultimate grace-giver, we cannot out-give Him.
- ii. Our Attitude in Giving – 9:7: God is more concerned about our attitude in giving than about the amount we give. God loves a cheerful giver.
- iii. The Source of Giving – 9:10-11: God is the one who enables us to give. We can ask Him for opportunities to give, resources to give, and an increased desire to give.
- iv. The Result of Giving – 9:11-15: In the ancient world, gift giving was the primary way friendship was established.ⁱⁱⁱ Since some Jewish Christians still resented uncircumcised Gentile believers, Paul hoped this gift would cause them to recognize that God's grace had indeed been poured out on the Gentiles. He believed that in their prayers, their hearts would then go out to their Gentile brothers and sisters. In addition, when we provide for others' needs, they thank and praise God for the provision, and He is glorified.

Summary Statement: Paul concluded with “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (9:15). He was probably referring back to 8:9, where he wrote, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

Principle: *Christians view giving as a privilege, in light of God’s gracious and lavish gifts to us.*

In Revelation 2:8-11, the Lord Jesus spoke of the church at Smyrna as poor, yet rich. In 2 Corinthians, Paul presents the churches of Macedonia this way. Their overflowing joy and extreme poverty resulted in rich generosity (8:2).

Romans 12:8 lists giving as a spiritual gift. Those with the spiritual gift of giving are less cautious about giving than others, yet as recipients of God’s grace, all believers should give. It is evidence that we have known God’s grace in our own lives.

Application: Robert Munger’s little booklet “My Heart – Christ’s Home” portrays our hearts as having many rooms, each representing a different area of our life to be given to Jesus when He comes to live within us at our conversion.^{iv} Have you given Him most areas of your life but locked Him out of the “room” of your finances?

Do you have a reputation for generosity or for stinginess? Stinginess is a control issue that reflects lack of trust in God. Generosity indicates confidence in God’s promises and provision. What does your attitude toward giving reveal about you? Do you know the grace of God?

Spiritual growth occurs as we recognize the vastness God’s grace and work out its implications in our lives. Giving is one such implication.

Transition: Paul commended the grace of giving and sent Titus to make sure the Corinthians’ offering was prepared for his arrival. As we have learned, Paul was also concerned about the Corinthian minority who had been influenced against him by false teachers. In chapters 10-13, the keynote of grace continues as Paul set forth evidences of it in his own life.

II. Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Ministry – 2 Corinthians 10-13

A. Purpose of the Chapters

- i. Unity with the Letter: In Lesson 9, we noted two seemingly disjointed passages in 2 Corinthians and that some scholars have suggested they were portions of letters Paul wrote on other occasions and were later inserted into this letter. Chapters 10-13 represents yet another disputed segment. In it, Paul intensely defended his apostleship. Since Paul also set forth a defense in chapters 1-7, some wonder why he would have interrupted that theme to speak of the offering, only to return to it. A few have even proposed that chapters 10-13 might constitute Paul's missing severe letter. His tone in these later chapters is certainly harsher, but since there is no evidence from the earliest manuscripts to support any later editing, the burden of proof falls on those who dispute the letter's unity.
- ii. Comparison with Defense in Chapters 1-7: In the first seven chapters, Paul defended his motivation in writing the harsh letter. These chapters seem to have been primarily addressed to the majority that had responded positively to that letter (2:3-4, 9; 7:8, 12). In contrast, Paul's defense at the end of the letter is set in the context of his upcoming visit and addressed to those the false teachers had beguiled. Thus, his tone is sharper. He did not want to come as a disciplinarian, so he pled with them to consider God's grace in his life as proof of his God-given authority and distance themselves from the false teachers before he arrived.

B. Accusations against Paul

- i. Nature of Accusations: In order to gain ground, the false teachers had realized the need to discredit Paul, who founded the church. Reading between the lines of chapters 10-13, it seems they accused him of speaking boldly and writing weighty and forceful letters from afar, but being timid, unimpressive, and empty of speech in person (10:1, 10). They also accused him of serving the Corinthians in an inferior manner, when compared with the way he had served others (11:7-9, 12:13), and by implication, when compared with the services they offered.
- ii. Identity of the Accusers
 1. We must again read between the lines to know anything about the identity of these false teachers. Apparently, they were Jews (11:22) who boasted that they were true apostles and claimed to have a special relationship with Jesus that Paul did not have (10:7, 11:5, 13, 18, 23; 12:11). They preached a different Jesus and urged the reception of a different spirit and a different gospel (11:4). Perhaps they were Judaizers (members of the circumcision party [Acts 11:2, 15:5, Titus 1:10]), who encouraged law rather than grace.

2. Some Bible students believe that these false teachers had accused Paul of being inferior to the twelve original apostles and that when Paul compared himself to the “super [or ‘most eminent’] apostles” (11:5 and 12:11), he was proving his equality with the Twelve. Others believe Paul used the term “super apostles” mockingly of his accusers because of their pretentious, self-aggrandizing claims. The Corinthians were impressed by their rhetorical skills, but to Paul, their boasting exposed them as false apostles. The true apostles of Christ understood that they were a far second to Christ. They were servants of the church and of Christ, seeking only glory for Him, not themselves.^v

C. Basis for Boasting – 10:1-11:15

- i. Paul’s Willingness to Confront – 10:1-2: Paul must have been more confrontational in the letter that followed his emergency visit to Corinth than he had been in person. Perhaps he had been too grieved by what he had found to properly determine a course of action until after he had left. Regardless of the reason, the false teachers used this seeming later change in Paul’s disposition against him, asserting that he was only bold from afar but timid in person. In truth, Paul was meek and gentle in Christ (10:1). Meekness is sometimes defined as power under control. Paul packed “high-powered, divine weapons, but ‘the meekness and gentleness of Christ’ always govern their use.”^{vi} He did not want to have to be as stern in person as he had been in that letter but told the Corinthians they were mistaken if they thought he was incapable of or unwilling to confront them face-to-face. He had already prepared himself to speak boldly to his accusers and any who believed them.
- ii. Worldly Boasting versus Spiritual Thinking – 10:3-18
 1. *Weapons with Divine Power*: Paul portrayed himself as fighting in a war against intellectual arguments and barriers to the truth of the gospel.
 - a. *Paul’s Weaponry*: He did not fight with worldly weapons, such as self-promotion, cunning, or deceit, weapons the false teachers used. Paul fought with spiritual weapons. Although he did not state exactly which spiritual weapons he had in mind, he emphasized the power and wisdom of the message of the cross (the gospel) in 1 Corinthians. He was probably also thinking of the “weapons of righteousness” he listed earlier in his letter: purity, understanding, patience, kindness, love, and truthful speech (2 Corinthians 6:6-7). In Ephesians 6, he speaks of truth, righteousness, faith, and the word of God as part of the believers’ spiritual armor.

- b. *Paul's Goal*: Christian ministry involves a battle for the mind.^{vii} In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says that the believer's spiritual weapons have power to demolish strongholds. Self-defense, justification, rationalization and intellectual arguments put up mental barriers to our full reception and application of the gospel. Paul's goal was that every thought would be taken captive and made obedient to Christ (10:5). Although he surely had apologetic defense of the gospel in mind, he was also interested in people's thoughts being brought under Christ's lordship.
2. *Worldly Standards of Evaluation*: Paul accused some of the Corinthians as making judgments about him and the false teachers based on appearances (10:7). These Corinthians had been deceived because they had not understood that God's grace is magnified in human weakness. God uses the weak things of the world to bring Himself glory.
- a. *Outward Impression*
- i. Perhaps Paul's appearance, mannerisms and speech were not impressive by the world's standards. The false teachers may have commanded a more admirable spiritual presence and manner of speech. They may have been far more impressed by worldly standards. Like the Lord Jesus, Paul was not interested in presenting himself that way. Although we may think of Paul today as a dynamic personality, apparently he was actually a humble and gentle man (10:1).
 - ii. One commentator reminds us, "It is always dangerous for immature Christians to evaluate true doctrine by the speaking skills of the leaders... Every congregation must take seriously the responsibility to endure sound doctrine and to reject false teaching, even though that false teaching comes from A+ speakers. We cannot permit anyone to teach anything in the name of intellectual freedom because of the power of preaching. Preaching can cause people to follow the preacher."^{viii} Some of the Corinthians had passed judgment based on appearances. Paul pointed them to his sufferings and the grace of God in his life as a more accurate basis for judging.

- b. *Comparing Ourselves with Others*: As for the false apostles, they found captive audiences by boasting about their own accomplishments and worth, and they foolishly measured and compared themselves against other teachers (10:12). Paul knew how unwise this was (10:12) and boasted only in the Lord (10:17).
- iii. Foolishness for the Corinthians' Sake – 11:1-21
1. *The Threat*: Gaining ground in our minds is Satan's first step in leading us from sincere and pure devotion to Christ. That is what happened to some of the Corinthians. Satan's strategy in deceiving them was the same as it had been thousands of years earlier with Eve (11:3). He masquerades as an angel of light (11:14), adeptly presenting thoughts and ideas that sound so close to the truth that if we are not alert, walking in the Spirit, and continuously renewing our minds with the word of God, we can be easily deceived.
 2. *Paul's Motives Questioned*: One such area in which Satan's servants, the false apostles, had made headway was in planting doubts in the Corinthians' minds about Paul's reason for not charging them for his services. Paul wondered how they could possibly think less of him for this, but as previously noted, they had apparently come to believe he did so knowing his services to them were inferior (12:13). Paul explained that his motives for serving them were so sincere and his loving desire not to burden them so complete, he had "robbed" other churches by receiving support from them in order to serve the Corinthians (apparently, these were the churches of Philippi [Philippians 4:15-18], the only region from which Paul is known to have ever willingly taken support).
 3. *A Humiliating Strategy*: Much to Paul's chagrin, he felt forced to stoop to the level of these false teachers in order to preserve the Corinthians' confidence in his gospel message. His beloved converts were in danger of abandoning their faith and thus, he apologetically "boasted" of things he had previously been too modest to make known.

D. Paul's Boasts – 11:16-12:10

- i. Hardships in Ministry – 11:16-29: Paul was leading the Corinthians to see that it was not human greatness but his willingness to be made weak that proved his divine accreditation. Weakness results in dependence. Paul had been whipped, beaten, stoned, imprisoned, shipwrecked, excessively exerted, in pain, hungry, thirsty, naked and exposed. In addition to all this, he daily bore a burden of concern for all the churches and their members. These trials exhausted Paul physically and emotionally. His weakness would have been evident. However, these were precisely the moments when God's power shone most brightly. When Paul had nothing left to give, God, for the glory of His name, graciously empowered Paul's ministry and message.
- ii. One Special Humiliation – 11:30-33: Like us, Paul was not naturally dependent on God. Paul recalled a time when he was forced to flee Damascus by being lowered over the city's walls in a basket under the cover of darkness to avoid arrest (Acts 9:25). Apparently, that humiliation was the beginning of many long lessons for Paul in dependence on God's grace. The result of Paul's dependence was always the same: increased power for ministry by the grace of God. Since the power of God was most evident in Paul's life when he was weak (12:10), if Paul were forced into any kind of boasting, it would be boasting in things that showed his weakness (11:30).
- iii. Paul's Vision – 12:1-6: Although this boasting embarrassed Paul, he went on to speak of visions and revelations he had received. Speaking of himself indirectly, he boasted of "a man" who had been brought up to the third heaven fourteen years earlier, whether bodily or only in a vision he did not know. In Jewish literature, the third heaven is the highest of the heavens, the place where God dwells. There, "the man" heard things he was not permitted to tell. Perhaps he meant that human language was inadequate to describe the experience, or he may have been given knowledge that is to remain sealed until some future date.
- iv. Paul's Thorn – 12:7-10: In light of this and other surpassingly great revelations, and in order to *keep* Paul humble, he was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment him (12:7).
 1. *A Physical Thorn?* No one knows for sure what Paul's thorn was, but God allowed Satan to afflict him in some manner. Since Paul referred to it as a thorn "in the flesh," many assume it was a physical ailment or disfigurement. Paul wrote that his physical condition had been a trial to the Galatians (Galatians 4:13-14). Perhaps it was enduring eye trouble that followed his blinding on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:8, Galatians 6:11). It could have been any number of physical issues.

2. *A Psychological or Circumstantial Thorn?* Some have suggested that Paul's thorn may not have been physical but psychological: an anxiety or distress, such as depression or self-doubt. Others think it was some circumstance, such as the persecution brought on by his adversaries.^{ix}
3. Regardless of the nature of Paul's thorn, it kept him dependent on God's power rather than on himself. Three times he asked the Lord to remove it, but the Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (12:9) Divine power is best displayed against the backdrop of human weakness so that God alone is praised. Sometimes God answers our prayers by removing the affliction for His glory, but He may also allow it to remain so that His grace will be put on display in our lives for the sake of His glory.

E. Paul's Desire for the Corinthians – 12:11-13:14

- i. A Loving Plea: Paul boasted of his weaknesses in order that the Corinthians who were in danger of wandering from the faith might be restored to him. God's empowering was proof of Paul's apostolic credentials. So, he boasted for their strengthening.
- ii. A Sincere Concern: The arrival of the false apostles threatened the Corinthians' unity. Paul was afraid that disunity would lead to discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. He had already dealt with divisiveness and some of the resulting sins in their congregation (1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 12:21, 13:2). In addition to discord, he had discovered sexual immorality among them (1 Corinthians 5:1, 6:12-20). He did not want to find the Corinthians in these same sins again at his arrival, so he challenged them to examine and test themselves. Were they truly in Christ? What did their behavior reveal? Some of them had passed judgment on Paul, but they should have first looked at their own lives. Paul urged them to "strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind and live in peace" (13:11).

Summary Statement: Paul's accusers judged him by worldly standards rather than considering God's grace in Paul's weaknesses as proof of his authenticity.

Principle: *When we seek God's glory and not our own, hardships become opportunities to experience and grow in God's grace.*

No one knew the grace of God better than Paul. How undeserving he had been, making a mission of imprisoning and putting to death followers of Jesus (Acts 7:58-8:1, 9:1-2)! When God saved him, He did something Paul in no way deserved. God not only stopped him in his evil tracks but also appointed him as the apostle to the Gentiles, their kings, and the people of Israel (Acts 9:15). Besides Jesus, no single New Testament character was more important to the formation of the early church or suffered more greatly in God's service. Paul is a trophy of God's grace. As a result, he was eager to glorify the Lord, not only for His blessings but also in hardships. Those who think in worldly ways never boast in their weakness, but for Paul, everything became an opportunity to magnify the Lord and put His grace on display. He challenged those who questioned his character and God-ordained authority: "If you want proof of my credentials, don't look at the things that the world applauds. Look at what God has done in my *weakness*. That is when God's grace has been most evident in my life."

Sometimes, it is harder to recognize God's power working through us when we are free and healthy and able to put forth our best efforts. But when circumstances hold us back and God continues to be glorified, we (and others) are forced to recognize that it is His power that accomplished it, not our own. When did you last thank God for the hardships in your life? Do you recognize them as opportunities to experience and grow in God's grace? Who might witness His grace in your weakness and praise Him as a result?

Conclusion

Spiritual growth occurs as we recognize the immensity of God's grace and work out its implications. Our sin nature looks to exalt self and, in the end, always craves something more. But in our new nature, we are learning to exalt God. As we do, we discover that His grace is always enough, and we are increasingly satisfied and content in every circumstance.

ⁱ N. A. Dahl (1977). "Paul and Possessions," in *Studies in Paul* (31). Minneapolis: Augsburg.

ⁱⁱ J. Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, CNTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964] 114.

ⁱⁱⁱ Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 414). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^{iv} Munger, Robert Boyd (1954). *My Heart – Christ's Home*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

^v Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 469). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^{vi} Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 426). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

^{vii} Kruse, C. G. (1994). *2 Corinthians*. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed., p. 1201). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

^{viii} Staton, K. (1988). *Second Corinthians: Unlocking the Scriptures for You* (p. 176). Cincinnati, OH: Standard.

^{ix} T. Y. Mullins, "Paul's Thorn in the Flesh," *JBL* 76 (1957) 299–303 as quoted in Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 520). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.