

2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:17

Quick Survey:

1. Let's say you are in the position where you have to correct someone. Who do you think will be most likely to listen to you: an old friend that you are close with, or a total stranger?
2. Turn it around. If someone were going to correct you, who do you think you'd be most likely to listen to, that same old, trusted friend, or a total stranger?

In each case the trusted, old friend is obviously the better choice. The long term nature of the relationship reassures us that the other person has our best interests at heart. Difficulties in relationships do not have to signal the end of those relationships. In fact, if the upfront commitment to one another is there, then God can use the difficulties to grow us, refine us and mature us. In the end we will be better friends and, with God's help, better Christians.

Stay committed to other Christians. If you do, then even difficulties will lead to greater growth.

Places mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1-2

All these places can be found on the map located [HERE](#)

1:1	Achaia Corinth (5)	The area around Corinth (5) The main city of Achaia
1:8	Asia	The entire coastal region from Troas (3) to Patara (9)
1:15, etc.	you = Corinth (5)	
1:16	Macedonia Judea	The entire area from Berea to Neapolis (4) also going north inland. The area around Jerusalem (13)
2:12	Troas (3)	
2:13	Macedonia	Paul went there from Troas.

Paul's desired route 1:15-16

Ephesus (2) – Corinth (5) – Macedonia – Corinth (5) – Judea (Israel)

Paul's actual route 2:12-13 and Acts. We can loosely follow the numbers of cities.

Ephesus (2) – Troas (3) – Macedonia – Corinth (5) – Macedonia – Troas (3) and Asia – Jerusalem (13)

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- I. We can choose how intensely we will engage in potential areas of conflict. 1:15 – 2:4
 - A. The Corinthians were critical of Paul for not following through on his original plan.
 - B. Paul tries to explain to them that he is still committed to them personally. The only reason he changed his plans was because he was tired of the constant conflict he was having in Corinth. **See 1:23 – 2:4 and 2:9.** Writing kept the conflict less intense, giving the Corinthians time to show signs of cooperation.
 - C. Jesus Christ remains committed to us. God has given us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee that we belong to Jesus. **See 1:19-22.**

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- II. A church needs to deal with flagrant sin, but the goal is restoration not condemnation. 2:5-11
 - A. When a church must deal with flagrant sin, in the most extreme cases this will mean that they are asked to leave the church.

1 Cor 5:9-13 NLT⁹When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. ¹⁰But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. ¹¹I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. ¹²It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. ¹³God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

- B. Repentance should lead to restoration: 2:5-11

***Second Corinthians 2:5-8 NLT⁵**I am not overstating it when I say that the man who caused all the trouble hurt all of you more than he hurt me. ⁶Most of you opposed him, and that was punishment enough. ⁷Now, however, it is time to forgive and comfort him. Otherwise he may be overcome by discouragement. ⁸So I urge you now to reaffirm your love for him.*

- C. The church's proper role is to help, not hurt, the problem person, to motivate him or her to repent of the sins in question and then return to the fellowship of the church.

***Galatians 6:1 NKJV¹**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

- D. This is harder to accomplish in our situation, where people are often less committed to one another personally and leave churches whenever things get a bit difficult, or in some cases just for a change of scenery.

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Steps in Church Discipline:

Pr 27:6 NKJV Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

1. **Confrontation** If this leads to repentance, then no further steps will be needed. This can happen more than once.

Matt 18:15-17 NKJV ¹⁵*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

2. **Separation** The person is asked to leave, lest they begin to influence too many others. We are to remove the person in sin in order to protect the integrity and health of the church.
3. **Restoration** If the person responds with a sincerely repentant attitude, then they should be restored to complete fellowship in the church.

God’s dealing with us:

1. **Confrontation** The conviction of the Holy Spirit
2. **Separation** When sin continues, the person senses a lack of fellowship with God. This is because God nature and character dictate that He cannot have close fellowship with those engaging in habitual or unrepentant sin.
3. **Restoration** Repentance leads to a feeling of relief and restored fellowship with God. The person senses God’s peace, a general lightness and ease in their inner being. Confession and repentance have a cleansing, stress-reducing influence on us as we sense the actual restoration of a close relationship with God.

As we read the following passage, think about how Jesus has shown His commitment to us.

Hebrews 12-11 NKJV ¹Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

³For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. ⁴You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. ⁵And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

⁶ For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.”

⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Final Prayers

Prayers pertaining to confession, repentance and restoration.

Some of us are presently cut off from other people who were once very important in our lives. Let's pray that God would restore those relationships. That doesn't mean the relationship will be just like it used to be; you can't get the past back or change things that have happened. Still, God can help you to make the future of that relationship better than it looks right now. It can be stable and productive rather than the toxic or radioactive thing it has become.

Some are feeling distant from God. It's time be restored into fellowship with Him. This can happen through confession, repentance and a simple decision to stay close to Jesus.