

# 2 Corinthians 12:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

## Analysis

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**For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong.** Paul's irony cuts deep: the only way Corinth was "inferior" to other churches was his refusal to accept financial support—which they somehow twisted into evidence of second-class apostleship. The phrase **I myself was not burdensome** recalls 11:9 where Paul explains he was supported by Macedonian churches, not Corinth, to avoid any accusation of greed.

The sarcastic plea **forgive me this wrong** (charisasthe moi tēn adikian tautēn, χάρισασθέ μοι τὴν ἀδικίαν ταύτην) exposes the absurdity: Paul's generosity (offering the gospel free, 1 Corinthians 9:18) was perceived as insult. Perhaps the Corinthians' patron-client culture interpreted refusing financial support as rejection of relationship, or false apostles suggested Paul knew he wasn't a real apostle, hence didn't dare charge fees like legitimate teachers.

This verse reveals how gospel freedom challenges social conventions: Paul wouldn't be enslaved to patronage systems, even when refusing financial support was misinterpreted as lack of affection or authority.

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman culture operated on patronage: benefactors supported clients who provided honor and services in return. Refusing patronage could signal social rejection. Paul's tentmaking self-support (Acts 18:3) allowed ministry independence but violated social expectations. The "super-apostles" likely accepted payment, appearing more legitimate by cultural standards—exposing how gospel ministry subverts worldly systems.

## Related Passages

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**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's financial independence model ministry freedom, even when congregations misinterpret it as lack of care or authority?
2. In what ways do contemporary Christians wrongly equate "professional ministry" (paid, full-time) with "legitimate ministry," echoing the Corinthians' error?
3. What does Paul's sarcasm ("forgive me this wrong") teach about using irony to expose absurd accusations?

## Interlinear Text

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τί	γάρ	ἐστιν	ὃ	ἡττήθητε	ὑπὲρ	τὰς	λοιπὰς
<b>what</b>	<b>For</b>	<b>is it</b>	<b>wherein</b>	<b>ye were inferior</b>	<b>to</b>	<sup>G3588</sup>	<b>other</b>
G5101	G1063	G2076	G3739	G2274	G5228		G3062
ἐκκλησίας	εἰ	μὴ	ὅτι	αὐτὸς	ἐγὼ	οὐ	κατενάρκησα
<b>churches</b>	<sup>G1487</sup>	<sup>G3361</sup>	<b>it be that</b>	<b>myself</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>burdensome</b>
G1577			G3754	G846	G1473	G3756	G2655
ὑμῶν	χαρίσασθέ	μοι	τὴν	ἀδικίαν	ταύτην		
<b>to you</b>	<b>forgive</b>	<b>me</b>	<sup>G3588</sup>	<b>wrong</b>	<sup>G3778</sup>		
G5216	G5483	G3427		G93			

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 9:12** (Parallel theme): If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 9:6** (Parallel theme): Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?

**2 Corinthians 12:14** (Parallel theme): Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not your's, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.