

# 2 Corinthians 5:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.

## Analysis

**For we commend not ourselves again unto you**—Paul addresses recurring accusations that he engages in self-promotion (*heautous synistanom en, ἔσυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν*, "we are commanding ourselves"). His opponents apparently brought letters of recommendation (3:1) and boasted in credentials. Paul rejects self-commendation as ministry mode.

**But give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart**—*Aphormēn didontes hymin kaucēmatos hyper hēmōn* (ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, "giving you opportunity for boasting on our behalf"). Paul provides ammunition for the Corinthians to defend him against critics. The contrast: *tous en prosōpō kauchōmenous kai mē en kardia* (τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ, "those boasting in face/appearance and not in heart"). *Prosōpon* (πρόσωπον) means outward appearance—eloquence, presence, status. *Kardia* (καρδία, "heart") represents internal reality—genuine transformation, authentic motives.

This distinction permeates 2 Corinthians: outward suffering versus inward renewal (4:16), earthly body versus heavenly dwelling (5:1-4), sight versus faith (5:7). Paul stakes authenticity on invisible realities the Spirit produces, not visible credentials culture values.

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman culture was intensely competitive, valuing rhetorical skill, impressive presence, and patronage networks. The "super-apostles" (11:5) likely excelled in these areas. Paul's weakness—physical unimpressiveness (10:10), refusal of patronage (11:7-12), suffering (11:23-29)—seemed to disqualify him. Paul inverts cultural values: God's power perfected in weakness (12:9-10).

## Related Passages

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

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

## Study Questions

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1. Where are you tempted to boast in outward appearance (achievements, status, image) rather than heart transformation?
2. How do you evaluate ministry and spiritual leaders—by cultural impressiveness or by internal spiritual fruit?
3. Can you rejoice in weakness and suffering as authenticating marks of genuine ministry, or do you still crave visible success?

## Interlinear Text

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οὐ γὰρ πάλιν ἔαυτοὺς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλὰ  
not For again ourselves we command unto you but  
G3756 G1063 G3825 G1438 G4921 G5213 G235

ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἵνα  
occasion give unto you to glory behalf our that  
G874 G1325 G5213 G2745 G5228 G2257 G2443

ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους  
ye may have somewhat to in appearance answer them which glory  
G2192 G4314 G3588 G1722 G4383 G2744

καὶ οὐ καρδίᾳ  
and not in heart  
G2532 G3756 G2588

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 3:1** (Parallel theme): Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you?

**2 Corinthians 1:14** (Parallel theme): As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are our's in the day of the Lord Jesus.

**2 Corinthians 10:18** (Parallel theme): For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.