

PAUL'S LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND RECOMMENDATION
II COR. 3:1-6

Introduction:

- A. The Lord's churches have used written communication for hundreds of years.
 - 1. "letters of recommendation." v1
 - 2. I Cor. 16:3, Identification.

- B. Some preachers write their own resume.
 - 1. v1.
 - 2. Applications to pulpit committees.

- C. What is the best letter of recommendation?
 - 1. It isn't what we say or promise.
 - 2. It is our past, what we have or haven't done.

I. THE CORINTHIANS WERE PAUL'S LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION. V2

- A. "ye are our epistle written in our hearts."
 - 1. Why, you are our letter of recommendation.
 - 2. When people see you, they see my work.

- B. "Known and read of all men."
 - 1. ginosko - to perceive, to know, to observe.
 - 2. ana - to learn by reading.

II. THEY WERE CHRIST'S EPISTLE TO OTHERS. V3

- A. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us."
 - 1. You are a letter from Christ.
 - 2. Prepared by us, a product of our ministry.
 - 3. Did their lives present a true picture?

- B. These were peculiar letters.
 - 1. "written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God."

2. "not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart."

- C. Paul heartily believed that his statements were true.
 1. "and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward"
 2. We are not simply complementing you.

III. PAUL BELIEVED THAT GOD MADE HIM AN ABLE MINISTER. V5,6

- A. He disclaimed all self-sufficiency. v5.
 1. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves."
 - a. sufficient = hikanos - coming to, reaching to.
 2. "but our sufficiency is of God."
 - a. sufficiency = autarkeria - sufficiency within ones self.
- B. God empowered him. v6 [The Holy Spirit does not empower us to keep the law!]
 1. able = hikanoo - to make sufficient, to make competent, to qualify.
 2. ministers = diakoneo - to serve, a table-waiter.
 3. They were ministers of the New Covenant, not priests of the law.
 5. The written law means death, The Spirit alone can give life to the soul.