

First and Second Corinthians ***Grace, Love, and Fellowship***

Lesson #13 for September 26, 2026

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 8:9; 13:11; Romans 16:20; 1 John 4:8-11; Philippians 2:1-2; Galatians 4:4-6.

1. What do grace, love, and fellowship have in common? Why should we talk about them?

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:]
Imagine you're at the airport, saying goodbye to a close friend or loved one. You've spent meaningful time together—maybe even worked through some challenges. As your friend or loved one is about to go through security, he or she turns back to say something, perhaps only a few words. But it is something that you'll remember long after the flight has taken off.

Maybe it was:

"Take care of yourself."

"Keep doing what you love."

"Don't forget—I believe in you."

Final words linger. They may be brief, but they often carry the deepest emotion, the most urgent reminder, or the core message that their speaker wants you to remember.

The apostle Paul often closes his letters in the New Testament in much the same way. After chapters of teaching, correction, defense, encouragement, and doctrine, Paul doesn't just sign off casually. **His final words are intentional and often are compact expressions of grace, love, and fellowship**—the very heart of the gospel and of the Christian community.

Paul doesn't just end his letters; he blesses, reaffirms, and refocuses his readers on what matters most. So, when we study the endings of Paul's letters—especially 2 Corinthians 13:11–14—we're not just reading polite farewells. **We're hearing the echo of Paul's heartbeat** and, perhaps, more important, **the heartbeat of God**.—*T-BSG** 171.^{††}

[T-BSG:] We will focus on the three key concepts of 2 Corinthians 13:11–14 that can be found in Paul's concluding words to the Corinthian church: **Grace.... Love.... Fellowship**.—*T-BSG** 171.[‡]

Letter-Writing Practices of Paul and of the Times of the New Testament

[T-BSG:] In the New Testament era, letter writing was a common, and essential, means of communication, especially in the Greco-Roman world, where figures such as philosophers, teachers, and leaders often sent letters that followed a standard format: greeting, thanksgiving, body, and closing. Paul adopted this structure, but he infused it with deep theological and pastoral meaning. He usually **dictated his letters to a scribe (*amanuensis*) and then had those letters delivered by trusted messengers, such as Timothy or Phoebe [or Titus]**.

Paul's greetings often merged Jewish and Greek customs ("grace [*Charis*] in the place of *Cheirein* (Greek)] and peace" [*Shalom*]), and his closings were more than farewells—they reflected his care, spiritual priorities, and

relationship with the recipients. In 1 Corinthians 16:19–24, Paul ends with greetings from other churches, a personal signature to validate the letter, a stern warning for those who do not love Christ, and a heartfelt blessing, emphasizing grace and his enduring love for the Corinthians.

In contrast, 2 Corinthians 13:11–14 closes with gentler exhortations toward joy, unity, and peace, culminating in a powerful blessing from the triune Godhead: **“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all”** (2 Cor. 13:14, ESV). These endings showcase Paul’s unique blend of doctrine and personal connection, turning the final words of his letters into lasting spiritual encouragements, focusing on grace, love, and fellowship.—*T-BSG** 172.†§

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Paul closes 2 Corinthians by re-emphasizing essential elements addressed in his letters. He does this through five imperatives (2 Cor. 13:11).... [1] “Rejoice”.... [2] “Strive for full restoration”.... [3] “Encourage one another”.... [4&5] “Be of one mind, live in peace.”—*BSG** for Sabbath, September 19.‡§

2 Corinthians 13:11: And now, my friends, good-bye [Grace to you]! Strive for perfection; listen to my appeals; agree with one another; live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation®* [GNT] (*Today’s English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition (2 Corinthians 13:11). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].‡ [Grace (*Charis*) is Paul’s Christian shorthand for Greek *Cheirein*.]‡

The Grace of God/Jesus

[T-BSG:] **The Starting Point of Grace:** In 2 Corinthians 13:11–14, Paul concludes his letter with a powerful and theologically rich benediction, placing a strong emphasis on the theme of grace. He begins the blessing with “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,” highlighting grace as the foundational element of the Christian life. This grace, expressed through Christ’s self-giving (*as seen earlier in 2 Corinthians 8:9*), enables restoration, unity, and peace within the troubled Corinthian church.

Paul’s decision to end not with rebuke but with grace reflects his deep pastoral heart and mirrors the way he ends nearly all his letters. For example, the books of Romans (*Rom. 16:20*), Galatians (*Gal. 6:18*), and Philippians (*Phil. 4:23*) all close with similar appeals to the sustaining presence of Christ’s grace. In 2 Corinthians 13:11–14, **grace** leads into **love** (from God the Father) and **fellowship** (through the Holy Spirit), forming a structure that encapsulates the full scope of divine relationship. For Paul, grace is not merely a theological concept but the living power that unites believers with God and one another. Thus, the apostle consistently uses it as the final word in his letters to remind the church that it is grace that saves, sustains, and empowers the Christian community.—*T-BSG** 172-173.†§

[BSG:] It is inspiring that at the end of 2 Corinthians, we see a reference to the grace of Jesus, just as in the opening (2 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 13:14). Paul begins and closes this letter with a reference to His grace [*Charis*]. As we

saw at the beginning of this ... [series], he couldn't stop thinking and speaking about Jesus.—*BSG** for Sunday, September 20.†§

[BSG:] How admirable and irresistible is the grace of Jesus! He left the riches of His eternal existence in heaven to become poor. He walked down the dusty roads of ancient Galilee. “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (*Phil. 2:8, ESV*). He did so in order for us to become “rich,” namely, for us to have a chance to be with Him in heaven. **It's hard for us, who have known only a world of sin, death, and suffering even to begin to grasp what it meant for Jesus to have left the courts of heaven in order to come here and offer His life for us.**—*BSG** for Sunday, September 20.†§

[BSG:] Paul refers to the grace of Jesus very often in his letters. Some pearls include, “The free gift by the grace of . . . Jesus Christ abounded for many” (*Rom. 5:15, ESV*). Those who receive this abundance of grace will “reign in life through . . . Jesus” (*Rom. 5:17, ESV*). As occurs with 2 Corinthians, **Paul also begins and ends other letters mentioning the grace of Jesus** (*Rom. 1:7, Rom. 16:20, 1 Cor. 1:3, 1 Cor. 16:23, Gal. 1:3, Gal. 6:18, Phil. 1:2, Phil. 4:23*). This topic occupied his thoughts, and he wanted it to fill the minds of the Corinthians, too.—*BSG** for Sunday.†§

Romans 1:7b: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.—*Good News Bible-TEV.** [*Charis and Shalom*]]†

1 Corinthians 1:3: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you **grace and peace**.—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†* [These are standard greetings.]]†

Galatians 1:3: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.—*Good News Bible-TEV.** [Paul had turned “Hello” into “Grace.”]]†

Philippians 1:2: May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.—*Good News Bible-TEV.**

[BSG:] This was his wish for all the churches. Notice what he says to the Ephesians: “Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love” (*Eph. 6:24, NIV*). Would he wish for us to love Jesus less than that, an undying love? Certainly not. After all, his wish was for the grace of Jesus to reach “more and more people” (*2 Cor. 4:15, NIV*) and become sufficient for them just as it was for him (*2 Cor. 12:9*).

Think about God's grace toward you like this. What do you deserve for the kind of things you have said and done? What, however, does God's grace offer you instead?—*BSG** for Sunday, September 20.†§

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] **The grace of Jesus Christ alone can change the heart of stone to a heart of flesh, and make it alive unto God.** Men may perform great deeds in the eyes of the world; their achievements may be many and of a high order in the sight of men, but all the talent, all the skill, all the ability of the world will fail to transform the character and make a degraded child of sin a child of God, an heir of heaven. Men have no power to justify the soul, to sanctify the heart. Moral disease cannot be healed save through the power of the great Physician. **The highest gift of heaven, even the Only-begotten of the Father, full**

of grace and truth, is alone able to redeem the lost.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,* May 2, 1892, par. 8.††

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p820.11001&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p820.11001&index=0)†

God's Love and the Power of God's Love

2. There are many passages in the Bible that tell us important things about God's love; but, there are a few that speak very specifically about that love.
3. Read John 3:16-17; Romans 8:37-39; and 1 John 4:8-12.
4. ***Have we experienced God's love as described in these verses?***

[BSG:] In a remarkable statement, Paul says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (*Rom. 5:8, NIV*). We can glimpse God's love in the sweet relationship between husband and wife, as well as parents and their children, in sincere friendships, and so forth. We can also see God's love in nature.—BSG* for Monday, September 21.‡§ [See Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* 10.1 = <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p108.28&index=0>]†

Romans 5:8: But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*†

[BSG:] However, nothing is more convincing than God's giving Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins. When we understand that God loved us to the point of sending Jesus to lay down His life for us, our response is willingness "to lay down our lives for the brothers" (*1 John 3:16, ESV*).—BSG* for Monday.‡§

5. **We need to recognize that the sacrifice of God was much more than allowing Jesus to die on our behalf. If Jesus as a Human Being had failed in the least possible way, Satan would have claimed triumph and the entire universe would have been thrown into chaos. How often do we consider that possibility?**
6. As we have said before: When Jesus was born, Satan claimed that **he would get Him to sin**. After all, every single person who had ever lived on this earth had sinned! (*Romans 3:23*) When it was near the end of Jesus's ministry and Satan realized that he would not get Jesus to sin, Satan determined to make things as difficult as possible for Jesus so **that Jesus would just give up on this plan of salvation** and reclaim His divinity and return to heaven, leaving us to our fate. When even that failed and Jesus remained faithful to the plan that the Father and the Son had set out before Jesus was born, Jesus died. At that point, Satan and all of his angels realized that their last hope was to keep Jesus dead in that tomb! When Gabriel (the angel who had taken Lucifer's place in heaven!) and his associate came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and called for Jesus to come out, and when Jesus arose in the power of His own divinity, Satan and his host realized that they were doomed for eternity. Love conquered selfishness and hate!

[BSG:] Paul wanted the Corinthians to live in unity. However, without love, there is no unity. That is why he taught them that "love builds up" (*1 Cor. 8:1, ESV*) and that without love, everything is useless and empty (*1 Cor. 13:1–3*). So, all we do must be done in love (*1 Cor. 16:14*), a love that is an extension of God's love.

What would we lose in the gospel if Jesus Himself were not fully and

eternally God?—BSG* for Monday.^{†‡§} [What would have happened if God the Father had come instead of Jesus? See *Letter 83*, 1895, par. 25: <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p14060.5690031&index=0>.][†]

7. **Many of us, as selfish and egocentric human beings, see the plan of salvation as all about saving us. Instead, the plan of salvation is and always has been primarily about God and the truth about His character and love.**

[EGW:] But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour [*sic*-British spelling] looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me.” [Notice that she did not write, “Draw all *men*....”] John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but **before all the universe** it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 68.2-69.0 [1890].^{†‡} [Compare *Reflecting Christ** 50.3-4 {1985} which has significant differences.][†] <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.244&index=0>][†]

8. The life and death of Jesus not only revealed the character of God, but they also revealed the evil of the character of Satan, the very nature and results of sin!
9. **The life and death of Jesus give us a choice: (1) With the help of the Holy Spirit and the angels, we can either live lives as close as possible to the example of Jesus and live forever in God’s loving presence; or (2) We will die the way Jesus died, of sin, separated from His Father, the only Source of life in this universe.**

The God of Love and the Power of God’s Love

[BSG:] In the ancient pagan world, people did not believe that the gods loved humans. Instead, the gods were malevolent and furious, and were supposed to be appeased. The idea of a God of love, as we see in the Bible, was a novelty. As surprising as this statement was in his time, Paul characterizes our God as “the God of love and peace” (2 Cor. 13:11).

Read 2 Corinthians 13:11. How can you draw hope from what is said here? How can you better experience what this verse teaches?—BSG* for Tuesday, September 22.^{†§}

- 2 Corinthians 13:11** [Reading again]: And now, my friends, good-bye [Grace to you]! Strive for perfection; listen to my appeals; agree with one another; live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.—GNB-TEV.*[†]

[BSG:] The phrase “the God of love and peace” can be interpreted in two different ways. On one hand, God is seen as the source of love and peace. On the other hand, God is characterized by love and peace. It is not necessary, however, to decide between the two. Because love and peace

are intrinsic characteristics of God, He gives us love and peace.

Elsewhere, Paul refers to God as “the God of endurance and encouragement” (*Rom. 15:5, ESV*); “of hope” (*Rom. 15:13, ESV*); “of peace” (*Rom. 15:33, Rom. 16:20, 1 Cor. 14:33, Phil. 4:9, 1 Thess. 5:23*), “the Father of mercies” (*2 Cor. 1:3*), and “the God of all comfort” (*2 Cor. 1:3*). God is the source of all these blessings. He gives them to us all out of His unfailing love.—*BSG** for Tuesday, September 22.^{†§}

[EGW:] “God is love.” 1 John 4:[8,]16. His nature, His law, is love. It ever has been; it ever will be. “The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity,” whose “ways are everlasting,” changeth not. With Him “is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” Isaiah 57:15; Habakkuk 3:6; James 1:17.

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings....

The history of the great conflict between good and evil, from the time it first began in heaven to the final overthrow of rebellion and the total eradication of sin, is also a demonstration of God’s unchanging love.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 33.1-33.4.[‡]

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.69&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.69&index=0)[†]

[T-BSG:] **The Sustaining Power of Love:** Paul concludes his letter (*2 Cor. 13:11–14*) with an appeal to unity and peace, culminating in one of the richest blessings in the New Testament. A central theme in this passage is love, especially as an expression of God’s nature. In 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul places “the love of God”—as a key part of the believer’s experience of God—alongside grace and fellowship. **This love is not a vague sentiment but the very essence of who God is**—the Source of both salvation and the life of the Christian community. This love undergirds the exhortations in 2 Corinthians 13:11, in which believers are encouraged to aim for restoration, to comfort one another, to be of one mind, and to live in peace. These commands to the church members are possible only when members first are grounded in the self-giving, reconciling love that comes from God....

In Ephesians 6:23, 24, Paul ends with “Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” and then adds, “Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible” (*ESV*). Here, love is both divine in origin and human in response—a reflection of God’s own love given to the believer. Similarly, in 1 Thessalonians 3:12, Paul prays, “May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you” (*ESV*), again tying love both to God’s work and to the church’s witness.—*T-BSG** 173.^{†§}

[T-BSG:] Love is the initiating attribute of God that reaches out in grace and binds believers together in fellowship. By ending his letter with this threefold blessing, Paul reminds the Corinthians—who are a divided and troubled church—that only a deep experience of God’s love can restore their unity, sustain their peace, and empower their fellowship.—*T-BSG** 173-174.[‡]

The Holy Spirit and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

[BSG:] The grace of Jesus not only reveals the love of God for us but also

brings the fellowship of the Spirit as a further effect of that love. At the same time, fellowship has its source in the love of God. And that is because without love, there is no fellowship. As Paul writes: “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (*Phil. 2:1, 2, NKJV*).

Some people say that the Holy Spirit is only a force or influence, but that cannot be true. After all, why would Paul mention two persons—the Father and the Son—along with a mere “force” in a trinitarian formula? That would make no sense. **Just as the Father and the Son are presented in a personal relationship (2 Cor. 1:3, 2 Cor. 11:31), the relationship of the Spirit with persons leads us to the conclusion that He is also a person (Rom. 8:15, 16; see also John 14:16, 17, 26; John 15:26).**—BSG* for Wednesday, September 23.^{†§}

[EGW:] We need to realize that **the Holy Spirit, who is as much a person as God is a person**, is walking through these grounds.—Manuscript 66, 1899 (From a talk to the students at the Avondale School [Australia].).

The Holy Spirit is a person....

The **Holy Spirit has a personality**, else He could not bear witness to our spirits and with our spirits that we are the children of God. He must also be a divine person, else He could not search out the secrets which lie hidden in the mind of God.—Manuscript 20, 1906—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism** 616.5-617.1.^{††} [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p30.3417&index=0>][†]

[BSG:] The phrase “fellowship of the Spirit” (*Phil. 2:1*) can be understood in two ways. It can mean fellowship with one another granted by the Spirit, or fellowship with the Spirit Himself. Several Bible interpreters argue that these senses are not mutually exclusive. After all, fellowship with one another is the consequence of fellowship with the Spirit.—BSG* for Wednesday.^{†§}

[BSG:] **Read 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 12:11; and 2 Corinthians 3:6, 17. What did Paul teach the Corinthians about the Spirit?**—BSG* for Wednesday, September 23.[†]

1 Corinthians 2:10-11: ¹⁰But it was to us that God made known his secret by means of his Spirit. The Spirit searches everything, even the hidden depths of God’s purposes. ¹¹It is only our own spirit within us that knows all about us; in the same way, only God’s Spirit knows all about God.—*GNB-TEV*.*

1 Corinthians 3:16: Surely you know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you!—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

1 Corinthians 12:11: But it is one and the same Spirit who does all this; as he wishes, he gives a different gift to each person.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

2 Corinthians 3:6,17: ⁶It is he who made us capable of serving the new covenant, which consists not of a written law but of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.... [Death is the result of violating the law.]

¹⁷Now, “the Lord” in this passage is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.[†]

[BSG:] Paul has much to say about the work of the Spirit. In 1 and 2 Corinthians, there are more than forty references to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit promotes the edification of the church (1 Cor. 14:12), enables people for mission (1 Cor. 2:4, 5), reveals the deep things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:10, 11), and teaches them to us (1 Cor. 2:13), dwells in us (1 Cor. 3:16, 1 Cor. 6:19), works with Christ for our justification (1 Cor. 6:11), bestows spiritual gifts to the church (1 Corinthians 12–14), seals us for salvation (2 Cor. 1:22), imprints the law in human hearts (2 Cor. 3:3), and gives new life in Christ (2 Cor. 3:6), and freedom from sin (2 Cor. 3:17). For sure, we cannot live without the Holy Spirit.

Why, too, is an understanding of the divinity of the Holy Spirit important for fully grasping God's love for us?—BSG,* Wednesday.†§

[T-BSG:] **Fellowship as the Relational Outcome:** The theme of fellowship is emphasized in 2 Corinthians 13:14 as a relational outcome of the Holy Spirit's work. In this passage, “fellowship” (*koinōnia*) refers to shared participation, a deep relational bond that exists not only between believers and the Spirit but among believers themselves, because of the Spirit's unifying presence. This closing blessing summarizes the heart of Christian community: the Spirit is the One who creates, and sustains, the unity and relational depth within the church. The Corinthian community, previously marked by divisions and rivalries, is now urged to experience reconciliation and harmony through the fellowship produced by the Spirit.

Paul refers to this theme of Spirit-empowered unity in other places, as well. In Philippians 2:1, 2, he encourages his readers: “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (ESV). Similarly, in Romans 15:5, 6, Paul prays, “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (ESV). Harmony is a relational result of God's Spirit, fostering mutual love and worship.

In Galatians 5:22–26, Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit as love, peace, and gentleness—all relational qualities essential to community life. Thus, in 2 Corinthians 13:14, Paul isn't merely offering a general or even customary farewell blessing; he's casting a vision for what the Spirit makes possible: a reconciled, grace-filled, loving community, bound together in divine fellowship. “Grace, love, and communion are not natural to human beings, but they flow to the church from the members of the Godhead as divine gifts. These were the gifts that could heal the church in Corinth and that would prepare it for the realization of the Christian hope at the return of the Lord.”—“2 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, p. 1685.—T-BSG* 174.†§ [Note that Galatians 5:23 ends with “self-control.” How does that fit?]‡

Our Triune God (The Trinity)

[BSG:] When reading 2 Corinthians 13:14, one may think that Christ is the

only source of grace, God is the only source of love, and the Holy Spirit is the only source of fellowship, but nothing could be further from the truth.

Read 1 Corinthians 1:3, 4, 9; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 2 Corinthians 1:2, 12; Romans 8:35; Romans 15:30; Galatians 2:20; and Ephesians 3:19. What do these passages say about grace, love, and fellowship in connection with the members of the Trinity?—BSG* for Thursday.[‡]

1 Corinthians 1:3-9: ³ May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

⁴I always give thanks to my God for you because of the grace he has given you through Christ Jesus. ⁵For in union with Christ you have become rich in all things, including all speech and all knowledge. ⁶The message about Christ has become so firmly established in you ⁷that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. ⁸He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be faultless on the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ. **⁹God is to be trusted, the God who called you to have fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [Could we experience all of that?][‡]

[T-BSG:] In 2 Corinthians 13, then, Paul is not merely signing off—he is summarizing the gospel. The “love of God” is the source of the “grace of Christ” and of the “fellowship of the Spirit.” **Only in this letter does Paul employ the formula of the Three-in-One Deity** “in the epilogue to highlight the distinctive roles of the Godhead in the work of salvation.”—“2 Corinthians,” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel Manuel Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), p. 1685.—T-BSG* 173.^{†‡§}

[BSG:] Although the phrase “God of peace” is somewhat common in the Bible, **the phrase “God of love” occurs only here (2 Cor. 13:11)**, and, hence, it deserves our most profound reflection.

As many interpreters have noticed, Paul’s reference to the God of love a few verses before the **trinitarian benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14** [That verse is not present in all versions of the Bible.] suggests that he thinks of God as three Persons. “Though he uses the word ‘God’ here as one of the three, his understanding of Jesus and the Spirit elsewhere in his letters . . . forces us to see the whole phrase as describing the one God whom the earliest church came to see in threefold form. It would be over a century before theologians . . . began to use words like ‘trinity’ as a shorthand way of expressing what Paul is already articulating.”—Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: 2 Corinthians* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), p. 148.

We believe in one God, the unity of three Persons who live eternally in a relationship of love. This triune God loves us and summons us to love one another in a way that reflects the love among the Three Members of the Godhead.—BSG* for Tuesday, September 22.^{†‡§}

[EGW:] There are **three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—**

those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church Containing Messages of Warning and Instruction to Seventh-day Adventists, Series B*,* 7:63.2 [1905]; *Evangelism** 615.1.††

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p249.337&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p249.337&index=0)‡

10. **Evolutionists challenge Christians to explain where this “Triune God” came from! But, they are completely helpless to explain where the “Big Bang” came from!**

[BSG:] The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work together for our salvation. Grace, love, and fellowship come not from only one [*sic*] but the Three Members of the Godhead. Yet, each One has specific functions in the history of salvation. Paul is aware of that and emphasizes this teaching in his letters. For instance, the plan of salvation is told with an incredible economy of words in Galatians 4:4–6, with the respective participation of the Three Members of the Godhead. **God the Father sent Jesus**, which suggests that the Father is the Source of that plan (*Gal. 4:4*). **The Son was born of a woman** (*Gal. 4:4*), which is a reference to the Incarnation and points to the fulfillment of an ancient promise (*Gen. 3:15*). The Son redeemed us and brought us back to the correct relationship with the Father, whom Satan had lied about (*Gen. 3:5*). And the **Holy Spirit legitimizes our identity as children of God** (*Gal. 4:6*).—BSG* for Thursday, September 24.†§ **[Read Galatians 4:4-6.]**‡

[BSG:] There are several other references to the Trinity in the Pauline letters. The three act together, enabling the church for mission (*1 Cor. 12:4–6*), giving us spiritual strength (*Eph. 3:14–19*), and promoting a profound unity among church members, one that replicates the unity that marks the very relationship of the members of the Godhead (*Eph. 4:4–6*). In Paul’s understanding, not only is God triune, but also the three Persons of the Godhead work together for our salvation (*Eph. 1:3, 13, 14*). In Ephesians, Paul goes so far as to mention that we must be filled with the fullness of the Father (*Eph. 3:19*), the Son (*Eph. 4:13*), and the Holy Spirit (*Eph. 5:18*).—BSG* for Thursday, September 24.†§ **[Read Ephesians 1:3,13-14.]**‡

[BSG:] In bringing the correspondence with the Corinthians to a close (*2 Cor. 13:14*), Paul could not finish with a better ending—a **promise that the three Dignitaries of the universe, the heavenly Trio, would be with us now and in the age to come.**

How should fellowship among church members reflect the lovely relationship of the Godhead?—BSG* for Thursday, September 24.†§

[BSG:] A beautiful portrayal of God’s love can be found in the parable of the prodigal son. How do we know the father in this parable is a loving father? **[Read Luke 15:11-32.]**

How can local churches demonstrate that the “fellowship of the Spirit” is a reality there?—BSG* for Friday, September 25.‡