

Fresh Faith

2 Corinthians

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GETTING STARTED

Learning how to study the Bible for ourselves is one of the most important skills we can acquire as Christians. This proficiency assists us in developing as true disciples of Christ, equipping us for life. Knowing and understanding God's Word and intentionally putting it into action gives us the ability to walk daily in Fresh Faith according to His will.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 14:26

Here is what you will need:

- Prayer: Pray before each lesson. Ask God to reveal His truth through His Word and ask for His help in understanding and applying it to your life.
- The Bible:
 - New King James Version (NKJV)
 - Alternatives:
 - New Living Translation (NLT)
 - New American Standard Bible (NASB)
 - English Standard Version (ESV)
- Available Resources:
 - blueletterbible.org
 - preceptaustin.org
 - Unger's Bible Dictionary
 - Strong's Concordance
 - Nave's Topical Bible

*If desired, all books can be purchased on Amazon.com
- Teachings:
 - www.youtube.com/reliancechurch "Fresh Faith-2 Corinthians"

What you can expect:

The questions in this study are designed to aid you in learning how to study the Bible on your own. The questions are generally centered around observing, interpreting, and applying the scriptures. However, questions will not cover every theme, truth, or subject in each chapter. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you into all truth and take you where He chooses. Our hope is that this study creates a hunger and thirst for God's Word that will inspire you to dig deeper.

Note: All scripture references are in the NKJV unless otherwise indicated.

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CORINTHIANS

The apostle Paul had such a heart for the church. He originally came to Corinth as a missionary hoping to bring the Gospel to its people who were far from God. In Acts 18, we see the fruit of Paul's ministry and the establishment of the Corinthian Church. As Paul continued to travel and start new works in various places, he began to receive reports that the church in Corinth was experiencing big troubles. Plagued by divisions, sexual immorality, debates about food, difficulties in weekly gatherings, and arguments about the resurrection, Paul writes 1 Corinthians to address and correct their problems. However, many rejected Paul's teaching and rebelled against his authority.

Second Corinthians was written around AD 57. After writing his first letter, Paul followed up in person with a painful visit and subsequent letter (perhaps written in-between 1 and 2 Corinthians). "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears" (2 Cor. 2:4). He wrote not to cause them further grief but that they might know the abundant love and concern he had for them. After this, most of the believers reconciled with Paul. He, and Timothy, wrote 2 Corinthians to assure them of his love and commitment to them.

In this epistle we see that Paul must defend his apostleship against accusations made by some in the church (Judaizers), which gives us a unique glimpse into his life and calling in ministry. Paul was "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God" (1 Cor. 1:1). The call of God to apostleship can be seen as one of high honor and glory, one of respect and admiration. However, Paul discovered otherwise. He experienced criticism, doubt, false accusations, and lack of respect for his position from some of the Corinthian believers.

We begin our journey witnessing how Paul responds to such allegations while simultaneously, giving us glimpses into his heart as not expressed in any of his other writings.

2 Corinthians 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. ⁶ Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. ⁷ And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.⁸ For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us, ¹¹ you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.¹² For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. ¹³ For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end ¹⁴ (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁵ And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit— ¹⁶ to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? ¹⁸ But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No. ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by

me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.²⁰ For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

²¹ Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,²² who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.²³ Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.²⁴ Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

Second Corinthians

Chapter One

Paul (with Timothy) begins chapter one by defending his apostleship and identifying the recipients of his letter. He makes sure to note this letter must reach more than simply the saints in the Corinthian Church. The doctrines and principles shared in this letter were read and shared first with the people of Corinth, then with all those in Greece, and now with us thousands of years later.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 1.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Reread 2 Corinthians 1:1-4.

3. Using your resources (see pg. 2) define the words *mercies*, *comfort*, and *tribulation* from verses 3-4.

Paul gives praise to God because he was a man who knew first-hand what it meant to be comforted by God.

4. Personal: What tribulations or afflictions have made you uniquely qualified to bring comfort to another in the same way God comforted you? Why is this important?

Here was a man, who never knew but what he might be dead the next day, for his enemies were many, and cruel, and mighty; and yet he spent a great part of his time in praising and blessing God.

Charles Spurgeon

The definition of paraklétos is called to one's aid. Usage: (a) an advocate, intercessor, (b) a consoler, comforter, helper, (c) Paraclete.

5. Below, we have recorded that in 2 Corinthians 1:3, comfort is the English word used for parakletos, and it represents God, the Father. Now, using Blue Letter Bible record below what English word is used for parakletos, and who it represents in 1 John 2:1 and John 14:26.

<u>Scripture Verse:</u>	<u>English word for paraklétos:</u>	<u>Who it represents:</u>
1) 2 Corinthians 1:3	Comfort	God, the Father
2) 1 John 2:1	_____	_____
3) John 14:26	_____	_____

6. Challenge: Look again at your definition of the word comfort in question 3. What observations or conclusion can you make after completing your answers in questions 3 and 5?

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 1:5-7.

1. The apostle Paul was a man who suffered much in his life and ministry.
Turn to 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and record the many ways Paul suffered.

2. Look up the following verses and note what you learn about Paul's attitudes and abilities through his hardships and sufferings.

- Philippians 1:20
- Philippians 3:10
- Colossians 1:24
- 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- 2 Corinthians 11:28

3. Personal: The Lord had great purposes for Paul other than just suffering for suffering's sake. What were they? What great purposes might the Lord have for you in your own personal sufferings?

In your times of suffering, you may be tempted to run or ask the Lord for a change of circumstances. Be encouraged, God has you right where He wants you and wants to comfort you and use your sufferings for your benefit and the benefit of others even if you cannot see it right now. Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 that, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

4. Personal: How and why are we encouraged knowing others suffer as we do?

5. What fruits are produced in us through our tribulations and sufferings? See Romans 5:3-5.

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 1:8-16.

1. What does Paul want his readers to be aware of (v.8)?

2. Whatever the problems were, Paul and his team's troubles were so severe, they didn't expect to make it out alive. What does he cite in verses 8-11 as the reasons for their deliverance? This is prescriptive for us as well.

3. In your own words, convey the heart of Paul in verses 12-16.

4. Paul seemed to live an others centered life. In general, is this true of Christians in our culture today? What hope do we have as believers living in this current era?
Hint: Think of what Paul was up against.

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 1:17-24.

We might never have had this precious verse (20) if Paul had not been so ill-treated by these men of Corinth. They did him great wrong and caused him much sorrow of heart... yet you see how the evil was overruled by God for good, and through their unsavory gossip and slander this sweet sentence was pressed out of Paul.

Charles Spurgeon

- 1. In this section of scripture, Paul’s character and message are being called into question. What other men and women throughout scripture have had their character and message called into question? Did they defend themselves? Explain how they defended or did not defend themselves.

- 2. In verses 21-22 what four things does Paul list that God has done for us?

- 3. Personal: Has there been a time when you have grown weary or discouraged by someone calling your integrity into question? If so, how did you handle it?

4. What are some biblical steps we can take when confronted by someone on character issues, whether true or false?

5. In verse 23, Paul talks about sparing them a second rebuke. Often, rebukes are called for, but this time it would seem God called Paul to hold off. What might be some of the benefits of waiting when God says wait?

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

2 Corinthians 2

But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow. ² For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?³ And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all. ⁴ For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you. ⁵ But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. ⁶ This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, ⁷ so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. ⁸ Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. ⁹ For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. ¹⁰ Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.¹² Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, ¹³ I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.¹⁴ Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵ For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷ For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Two

Paul was concerned his previous letter had brought tremendous sorrow to the believers in Corinth. Hurting them was never his intention. In fact, he loved them deeply and wanted them to share in mutual joy. Correcting or disciplining one another should always be for the benefit and purpose of helping, not punishing.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 2.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Reread 2 Corinthians 2:1-4.

3. In your own words, share what you think Paul is trying to convey to these believers in verses 1-4.

Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 1:23

4. Why is it important that Paul explains his deep love for them (v.4)?

5. Throughout this letter Paul makes mention of his struggles in writing to the Corinthian believers. Look up the following verses to grasp his thought process.

- 2 Corinthians 2:4
- 2 Corinthians 7:8
- 2 Corinthians 12:20-21
- 2 Corinthians 13:10

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 2:5-8.

Paul is discussing church discipline. Sin is detrimental to a believer. However, being too harsh can overwhelm the broken person and could cause them to give up or reject God’s forgiveness. This is why biblical discipline presented in love is so important. Rightly responding to correction with obedience is essential and brings joy to any believer.

- 1. Define the word *sufficient* (v.6).

- 2. What might the consequence of too much church discipline (v.7)?

- 3. Challenge: There is an idea after studying verse 6 that has to do with citizenship. Citizens have certain rights and privileges, as well as punishments for not abiding by the law. Investigate root words and definitions for the word *punishment*. A believer has certain rights and privileges as a member of the church. In your own words, describe some rights and privileges afforded to you as a member of a local church body. What is the reasoning behind removing an unrepentant believer (punishment) and how would that benefit them?

4. What does Paul instruct them to do in verses 7-8, after stating that the punishment was enough in verse 6? What does Paul give as the reason for this instruction (v.7)?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 2:9-11.

1. Paul challenged the believer's obedience by asking them to be tough on sexual immorality back in 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Here in 2 Corinthians chapter 2, he is telling them to forgive and to reaffirm their love. God calls us to be harsh on sin, He also calls us to be loving and forgiving. Which one of these callings are you more comfortable with? Explain your answer. Where would you say you have room for improvement?

2. What do the following verses tell us about forgiving?

- Colossians 3:13

- Luke 23:34

- Psalm 32:5

- Luke 6:37

- Matthew 6:14-15

To withhold forgiveness from the repentant is to play into the hands of Satan.

There is nothing more dangerous than to give Satan a chance of reducing a sinner to despair. Whenever we fail to comfort those that are moved to a sincere confession of their sin, we play into Satan's hands.

John Calvin

3. What consequences of unforgiveness did Paul warn them about in verse 11?

4. Define the word *devices* (v.11). Paul tells us that we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Through your experiences and own personal study, what devices might Satan use in our own lives?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 2:12-17.

1. According to Paul, not every open door should be walked through. What reason does Paul give for his decision to leave Troas (vv.12-13)? How does this inform our decision-making process?

2. Record two things Paul is thankful for (v.14).

3. Define the words *triumph* and *fragrance* from verse 14. What do these words mean to you personally?

4. According to verse 15, we are the fragrance of Christ to both those who are being saved and to those who are perishing. Using the NLT, what is the difference in the aroma described in verse 16? Why will we be rejected by some when sharing the gospel?

For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!'

Romans 10:13-15

5. Why are we to preach the Word of God with sincerity and with Christ's authority (v.17)? Share in group some ways we can easily share the good news with others.

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

Explore the idea of forgiveness further through cross-referencing other passages that talk about forgiveness. Use the 5 W's and an H (Who, What, When, Where, Why & How) to really dive into a passage and see what the Lord shows you. Record your observations.

Select a passage on Forgiveness or a Bible story where God or someone else displayed forgiveness.

- Who showed forgiveness or who was forgiven?

- What was the offense or circumstances?

- Where did this event take place (Geographical location or significance of the location)?

- When did this event take place? What was the relation of the timing to the surrounding people or events?

- Why do you think God included this event in His Word? Why was the person forgiven or what motivated the person to forgive?

- How did the biblical account end? What lessons can you learn from this story?

2 Corinthians 3

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you? ² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.⁴ And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.⁷ But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. ¹⁰ For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. ¹¹ For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.¹² Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— ¹³ unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Second Corinthians
Chapter Three

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

3 John 1:4

Paul has such a heart for the people of God to grow in the image and likeness of Christ. He is right not to be concerned with pedigrees or commendations, but understands the only commendation needed is true repentance that results in a changed life. The fruit of ministry is a transformed life. This is what is recognizable to all.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 3.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Reread 2 Corinthians 3:1-3.

3. Define the words *commend* and *commendation* (v.1).

4. Read 2 Cor. 3:1-3 in the NLT. In your own words, what does Paul say about letters of commendation in these verses? What do his thoughts say about leadership within the church?

5. What role does testimony play in our witness for Christ? Are you prepared to share your story with others? Practice what you would say if given an opportunity to share with someone who needs hope. Try to keep it to two minutes.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

1. After studying verses 4-5, what do you think Paul is trying to convey here?

2. As a servant, briefly state what it means to be sufficient or adequate (vv.5-6).

3. In verse 6 what is “the new covenant” that Paul is talking about? What does he mean when he says, “not of the letter, but of the Spirit”?

4. Look up the following verses and note how they support our text in verse 6.

- Jeremiah 31:31

- 2 Corinthians 5:18

- 2 Corinthians 5:20

- Ephesians 3:7

- 1 Timothy 1:12

- Hebrews 7:22

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 3:7-11.

1. Paul describes both the Law and eternal life in Christ as being *glorious*. Which of these, “exceeds much more in glory” (vv.7-11)? Explain why this is so.

2. How can the Law be glorious and deadly all at the same time (vv.7-11)? See Galatians 3:24-26 and David Guzik’s commentary (see pg. 2).

3. According to verse 11, the old covenant is *passing away*. What does Hebrews 8:7-13 say about this?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

1. What can we exercise because of the hope given to us by Christ (v.12)? Why is this an important practice for us today?

Paul's references to Moses putting a veil over his face are taken from the Old Testament account in Exodus 34:29-35. Upon coming down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments Moses' face was radiant, as it was each time he entered into the LORD'S presence in the Holy of Holies.

2. According to verse 13 of our text, why did Moses put a veil over his face?

For many, there is still a veil over the law. They cannot see that its glory and purpose has passed away and is no longer the covenant that God has with His people.

3. What does Jesus say about Himself in Luke 4:18-19?

4. When is the veil taken away (v.16)?

5. Personal: What does it mean to you personally that you have *liberty* in Christ (vv.17-18)? Spend some time thanking Him today!

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

4. Break into groups of 2 or 3 and practice sharing your testimony with each other.

Digging Deeper (optional)

This chapter talks about veils as actual items, like that worn by Moses, and also symbolically, like the Israelites (Day 4, question 2). Walk through the scriptures using your resources to learn more about the usage, context, and symbolism of veils. Record what you discovered.

2 Corinthians 4

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. 8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. 15 For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Second Corinthians
Chapter Four

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 4.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 4:1-6.

- 1. In verse 1 Paul states that (as believers) we have a ministry (to share the Gospel). He goes on in verses 1-6 to instruct us about things we are to do, and things we are not to do. What are they? Also, see Matthew 28:16-20.

Do's	Don'ts

- 2. Define *losing heart*. What reason does Paul give for not losing heart?

- 3. Define *mercy* from verse 1. Why is knowing we've obtained God's mercy important to us?

- 4. Personal: Share a time when it was difficult for you to shine the *light of Christ* in a season of *losing heart* (or fainting) in your faith. Is there a biblical remedy? How did you navigate through such a season?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 4:7-15.

1. We are but fragile earthen vessels with this magnificent treasure, Jesus Christ, shining through us. Why is this truth so important for us as believers (vv.7-9)?

2. Read Ephesians 3:1-12 and note how it compares to our text and what it means for us today.

3. What does Paul mean in Ephesians 3:10 when he states, "to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*,"?

4. Look up the following verses and note what God's Word says about the angels who are looking on. The conduct of the church is so important because angelic and demonic (fallen angels) are watching us. God's intent is to teach them through us.

- 1 Corinthians 4:9
- 1 Corinthians 11:10
- 1 Timothy 5:21
- 1 Peter 1:12 s

5. Define the word *manifested* from 2 Corinthians 4:10. According to verses 10-12, what is required of us for this manifestation to take place?

6. Do your own in-depth study of verses 13-15. How does this excite you to be a part of what God is doing right here, right now?

*I would have lost heart, unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
In the land of the living.*

Psalm 27:13

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

1. In these verses we find some contrasting ideas. What is Paul’s big idea?

2. How can Paul allude to all our troubles being *momentary, light affliction* (v.17)?
How does such a statement help us? See also, 1 Peter 5:10 and Romans 8:18.

3. Paul tells us to focus on eternal things. What things should we practice daily that help us keep our focus? See Acts 2:42.

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

In verses 7-9 & 17, Paul talks about the affliction, crushing, and despairing that he and Timothy (and others) have experienced in their walks of faith and in sharing the Gospel.

Search the scriptures for someone who has been crushed, has despaired, or has experienced persecution for their stand with God. Choose someone from the Old or New Testament and write about this person's experience. What did they learn from God and about Him through their difficult times?

2 Corinthians 5

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. 9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. 12 For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again. 16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be

reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Five

In our previous chapter, Paul discussed his many sufferings for the sake of Christ, ending with the exhortation to look not on the temporary, but the eternal. Rather than death being something to be feared, Paul concludes the change from mortality to eternity as something he groans for. He longs for it, and so should we.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 5.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 5:1-8.

1. Paul recognized that death, rather than rapture, may be a possibility. As a tentmaker, Paul compares our earthly bodies to a tent. If our earthly tent (our body) is destroyed, what does Paul say we have?

If we read verses 2-4 in various Bible translations, we see words like groan, long, and *earnestly desire* (in the positive) to describe our yearning for our heavenly bodies. In contrast, Paul uses words like *burdened*, *sigh*, *groan* and *grow weary* (in the negative), to describe our lamentation over the decaying of our earthly bodies.

2. Knowing we are spiritual beings, what are some *results* of keeping our minds focused on heavenly things? What are some *concerns* of being distracted by the things of the flesh (this world)?

Results	Concerns

3. Personal: As a believer what does it mean to you that you will one day live eternally with God? Mortality will put on (be clothed in) immortality! Thank Him for that today!

4. God has prepared us for *this very purpose* by giving us His Holy Spirit as a *guarantee* (v.5). Define the word *guarantee*. According to verses 6-8 share what marks the life of a believer who walks in the truth of this guarantee. See also Hebrews 11:1.

5. According to Ephesians 1:13-14 how can a person receive this personal guarantee. See also Titus 2:14 and 2 Corinthians 1:22.

What value is the grace that I profess if it leaves my life unchanged?

Charles Spurgeon

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 5:9-11.

1. Through your own personal study, what is the difference between the *judgement seat of Christ* (v.10), and the *great white throne judgement*? See also Revelation 20:11-15.

2. As believers, verse 10 tells us we will give an account when we appear before Christ. What is our *compensation* based on? Does this include our motives and thought life? Explain why or why not.

For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Hebrews 6:10

3. Why do we persuade people (v.11)?
Personal: Does this truth lead to action in your daily life towards those far from God? Are there any changes that you should make?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 5:12-21.

What we believe and how we behave must always go together. What God has done for us should motivate us to do something for Him. This latter portion of 2 Corinthians 5 challenges us with our marching orders. Although we each have individual gifts, we all have the same ministry of reconciliation. What an honor to be given the privilege of releasing the fragrance of Christ to a lost world and to one another.

1. Paul was giving the believers in Corinth reasons to support him when those who opposed his apostleship *peddled the gospel* (2 Corinthians 2:17). How did he describe these men in verse 12?

2. What does Galatians 6:12-15 say about those who “desire to make a good showing in the flesh”? What does Paul say is important to him? How does this compare to the errant ministries of today?

3. Define *compel* from verse 14. Knowing Christ died for you personally, how can you practically live for Him and not yourself (vv.14-15)?

Personal: What things might need to change to see this truth lived out in your own life?

4. In Day 3, we discussed how we are to live for Christ. What truths do verses 16-17 reveal that would make this a reality and provide help in the process?

5. According to verse 18, what two things has God done?

6. Define *Ambassador* from verse 20.

7. What is the Gospel message in verse 21? Pray for someone by name who needs this truth today.

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

1. The Holy Spirit resides within each believer as a pledge (v.5). There are a number of things Paul says we are enabled to do because of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, such as being always of good courage (v.6). Read back through this chapter and list the things the Holy Spirit gives us power for in our lives.

2. As believers, we have gifts from the Holy Spirit to enable and empower us in our walk with Him and for our ministry to others. What are your gifts? How are you using them in your life as one reconciled to Christ? How are you using them to reach out to those who need reconciliation to God?

2 Corinthians 6

1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 3 We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. 4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, 7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things. 11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you; our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. 13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open. 14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." 17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

Second Corinthians

Chapter Six

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 6.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 6:1-2.

1. Paul begins chapter 6 with another plea. What is it? From the same verse define the word *vain*.

2. Paul describes us as workers together with God (v.1). Considering what we've discovered from question 1, what does it mean to you to partner with God in His work?

3. How do each of the following verses speak to the idea of believers partnering with God in hopes of reconciling the lost to Him?

- Matthew 23:37
- Acts 14:3
- Romans 12:1, 6
- 1 Corinthians 3:9
- 2 Corinthians 5:18-21
- 1 Peter 4:10

4. According to verse 2 when is, "the accepted time"? This not only speaks of the act of being saved, but of the call to exercise God's grace in our daily walk. What is the warning and promise in Hebrews 3:13-15?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

1. Paul says we are to live in such a way that, “We give no offense in anything, that our ministries may not be blamed” (v.3). Paul then instructs us in verses 3-10 how to accomplish this. Make a list below according to the headings given.

Hint: Circle the words *in*, *by*, *as*, and *yet*, in the text first.

Walk *in*: Sustained *by*: Viewed *as*: *Yet*:

Walk <i>in</i> :	Sustained <i>by</i> :	Viewed <i>as</i> :	<i>Yet</i> :

2. Why are these things (in the lists above) important for anyone who wants to effectively minister to others?

3. Now read verses 4-10 in the NLT. How does this translation add insight to the topic? Share how this encourages you, and what might be a challenge for you personally.

4. What are some practical ways we can implement the principles from verses 1-10 into a daily partnering with God?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 6:11-18.

1. In your own words, describe what Paul’s appeal is to the Corinthians in verses 11-13?

2. Personal: Describe a situation where reconciling a relationship is possible, but it’s up to the other party. You’ve loved in every way possible, but now it’s up to them. Pray for God to move on their heart.

3. In verse 14, we see a command. What is it? What reasons does Paul give for this command? See also 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19.

4. This *unequal yoking* is often applied to marriage. What other relationships or partnerships does this command include (v.14)?

5. After studying on your own, what do you think it means to, “Come out from among them and be separate” (vv.16-18)? How do we contrast and compare this with Jesus being a *friend of sinners*? What does He promise in the same verses?

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

In verse 4 Paul states that they are, *commending (themselves) as ministers of God*. From there, verses 4-10 detail how Paul and his companions endured their service toward believers, their witness and sacrifice to share the Gospel, and their dedication to their Savior and Lord. This *list* is divided into categories such as outward hardships, personal integrity in ministry, and attacks upon their character.

List these things putting them into categories. Then, find passages in scripture that illustrate these things in the lives of Paul and his fellow servants of Christ. What insights did you discover?

2 Corinthians 7

1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. 2 Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation. 5 For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. 6 Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. 9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 12 Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you. 13 Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. 15 And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. 16 Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Seven

Considering the ministry God has given to us and the promises set forth, Paul reiterates his call to holy living.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 7.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

3. What are the promises Paul is referring to (v.1)? See 2 Corinthians 6:16-18.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 7:1-4.

- 1. Regarding the promises given in 2 Corinthians 6:16-18, why is it important to, “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness” (v.1)? Use your favorite commentary for study to answer this question. In addition, what does Paul say is required in order to do this (v.1)?

How can those expect God to purify their hearts who are continually indulging their eyes, ears, and hands in what is forbidden, and in what tends to increase and bring into action all the evil propensities of the soul?

Adam Clarke

- 2. Paul appeals to what he believes to be the root issue, what is it (v.2)? From your personal studies, what might the Corinthians believe about Paul to make them close themselves off from him?

- 3. How does Paul respond to these *troubles* in ministry (v.4)?

4. How do these *troubles* in ministry affect Paul (v.4)?

5. Paul states, he is *filled with comfort and exceedingly joyful* (v.4). Knowing what we know about Paul and his ability to persevere, what is produced by tribulations according to Romans 5:3?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 7:5-12.

- 1. Paul described some difficulties they faced when coming into Macedonia, what were they (v.5)?

Personal: What are some of your greatest *outside conflicts* and *inside fears*?
Pray for those now.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:9-10

- 2. Who did God bring and what did he report to Paul about the people they served (vv.6-7)?

- 3. Paul no longer regrets sending his letter to the Corinthians.
Personal: Can you think of a time when you went through something sorrowful from God, not meant to damage you, but to bring about repentance and a changed life (vv.8-9)?

4. What does, “godly sorrow” and “the sorrow of the world” produce according to verse 10?

Look up the following verses and note what they mean to you personally:

- Proverbs 27:6

- Hebrews 12:9-11

5. Again, in verse 11, Paul says they, “sorrowed in a godly manner.” Paul mentions several things that this sorrow produced in them. List them below.

6. In verse 12, Paul shares the heart of a true leader and gives the real reason why he was willing to cause their sorrow. What was it (v.12)? Why is this type of leadership in the church necessary? What does Hebrews 13:17 have to say about this?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 7:13-16.

1. Despite criticism, Paul was encouraged and, “He rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus” because of the responsiveness of the Corinthians to his leadership. What affect does Paul’s example have on your ability to endure criticism and hard times in life and ministry?

So, we have been greatly encouraged in the midst of our troubles and suffering, dear brothers and sisters, because you have remained strong in your faith. It gives us new life to know that you are standing firm in the Lord. How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God’s presence.

1 Thessalonians 3:7-9 NLT

2. What does Paul say about the Corinthians in verse 14? What does he attribute these wonderful results to?

3. Look up the following verses and note how they relate to our text this week:

- Isaiah 66:2
- 2 Corinthians 2:9
- Ephesians 6:5
- Philippians 2:12

In his commentary, David Guzik said, “At the end of this chapter, Paul praises the Corinthian Christians, and they seem to be in a place of victory. But in the “sorrowful letter” (mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:1) there was no praise. What was the difference? It was their real repentance, reported by Titus and commented on by Paul in this chapter.”

4. What was Paul’s conclusion about the true followers of Christ in Corinth (v.16)?

Thus by praising them, he further winneth upon them, whom before he had more sharply handled. Sour and sweet make the best sauce.

John Trapp

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

- 1. Choose one question from this week’s lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

- 2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you’ve learned this week?

- 3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week’s lesson?

2 Corinthians 8

1 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God. 6 So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. 7 But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also. 8 I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 10 And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago; 11 but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have. 12 For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have. 13 For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.” 16 But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. 18 And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19 and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind, 20 avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us— 21 providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. 22 And we

have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you. ²³ If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. ²⁴ Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Eight

As we enter chapter 8, we notice Paul begins by announcing a call to generous giving. Having witnessed repentance of the Corinthians, (in the previous chapter) Paul now resumes the discipleship process expecting and encouraging their continuous growth. He highlights the examples of other believers in the churches of Macedonia (v.1) and describes how they are enthusiastic to apply the Word of God in their daily living. In this chapter Paul emphasizes and explains how one should give monetarily.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 8.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

1. What does Paul attribute to the cause of such generosity according to verse 1?

2. The churches in Macedonia joyfully overflowed with rich generosity. In verse 2, Paul shares some interesting facts that might cause one to think it wasn't such a *good idea* for them to be so generous. What are they? What persuaded these believers to give? See NLT for clarity.

3. What does Paul testify or bear witness to about their generosity in verse 3? Were they coerced in any way?

4. As a matter of fact, they implored (begged) Paul with much urgency for the privilege of giving to the saints in this way (v.4). What actions did these believers take first that would have prepared them and made this type of generosity possible (v.5)?

5. The Corinthian believers excelled in many things and now Paul wanted them to excel in completing the gracious act of giving they had started previously. See verse 7 and list the many ways they *abounded in*.

6. In your own words, share why you believe it is important for a Christ follower to also be generous in giving in addition to the above-mentioned attributes.

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 8:8-15.

Christ is our pattern in the gracious act of generosity.

- 1. Paul states that he is not commanding them to give, but rather testing them.

What is Paul looking to test in these believers and what is he using as a benchmark for such an evaluation (v.8)? How does Hebrews 10:24 and James 2:14-16 correlate with this thought?

- 2. Paul offers advice in verses 10-11. What does he say? Why is it important to finish what we start?

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

James 1:22-25

3. What are the guidelines for this type of generosity (v.12)? What *do you* have (in your possession) that might be able to be a blessing to others?

4. Paul introduces the idea of equality in relation to our generous giving (v.14). Define the word *equality*. Then, after studying on your own, describe what you think Paul means in your own words.

All that we have is manna... And just as manna, which was hoarded to excess out of greed or lack of faith, immediately putrefied, so we should have no doubt that riches which are heaped up at the expense of our brethren are accursed and will soon perish and their owner will be ruined with them.

John Calvin

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 8:16-24.

1. Paul now plans to take this gift to Jerusalem. Any church leader showing integrity would do exactly what Paul does in verse 20. What precautions does Paul take when dealing with money according to verses 18-21?

2. What is Paul’s exhortation in verse 24?

3. Share an example of a time when either someone was truly generous to you, or you were generous to another when, by all earthly standards, it seemed impossible.

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

2 Corinthians 9

1 Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; 2 for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. 3 Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; 4 lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting. 5 Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not as a grudging obligation. 6 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad; He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." 10 Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 11 while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God. 12 For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, 13 while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, 14 and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Second Corinthians

Chapter Nine

Principles in giving in response to the grace of God.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 9.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 9:1-5.

1. What was Paul boasting about in verse 2? What did the *enthusiasm* or *zeal* of the Corinthians cause?

2. Has there ever been a time when someone else's generosity motivated you to be generous? Please explain.

3. What was Paul's concern in verse 3?

4. In verse 5, Paul gives an exhortation and a reminder. What are they? Additionally, Paul questions their motivation in giving. What was he concerned about?

5. How do you *count the cost* in your giving to the church? In other words, what do you take into consideration/calculate when deciding to give? After answering honestly, consider the questions below.

- Are you proactive or reactive in your giving?
- Do you research before giving?
- Are you giving regularly and consistently?
- Are you giving proportionately?
- Are you giving cheerfully?
- Do you consider the results and impact of your giving?
- Do you follow up on your investment to make sure your money is being used for the Kingdom?

6. What is the difference between tithes and offerings?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 9:6-9.

1. What metaphor does Paul use to reveal the results of giving (v.6)? How does this metaphor corollate with giving financially?

2. We may feel as if we are losing something when we give to the church, but according to our text, what are we gaining (v.6)?

3. Give a biblical definition for the word *purpose*. List the principles Paul presents to us regarding giving (v.7). How can we *purpose* in our hearts to give with the right attitude?

4. Recognizing a need is one of the first steps in purposing to give. Look up the following verses and note how each speaks of *seeing the need*:

- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Proverbs 11:25
- Isaiah 32:5 & 8
- Matthew 25:35-40
- 1 John 3:17-18

5. What promise does God make in verses 8-9? Read in the NLT for clarity. How long will our *righteous acts* last (v.9)? Is Paul saying that our giving makes us righteous before God? Explain why or why not.

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 9:10-15.

1. In verses 9 and 10 Paul circles back around to his planting metaphor. Who does Paul credit for our ability to give in the first place? If God provides seed for the farmer and bread for food, what will He provide for us? What is the ultimate result of such generosity?

2. The generous giving of the Corinthians resulted in two good things. What does Paul say they are (v.12)?

3. In verse 13, Paul says the recipients will glorify God. Ultimately, what are these Corinthians obeying and bringing attention to? See the NLT for more clarity.

4. According to verse 14, what will these recipients do in return?

5. Challenge: In your own words, how does our generosity reveal the ultimate *indescribable gift*, Jesus, to those who are lost? How is giving an effective way to share the gospel?

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

- 1. Choose one question from this week’s lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

- 2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you’ve learned this week?

- 3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week’s lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

Paul says, “Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6 NASB). This sowing and reaping theme is mentioned in other places in the Bible as a principle. Find another scripture passage that describes sowing and reaping. It doesn’t have to be literal. It could be a metaphorical passage like this one. Share below what God shows you.

2 Corinthians 10

1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you but being absent am bold toward you. 2 But I beg you that when I am present, I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. 7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's. 8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed— 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10 “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present. 12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment. 17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Ten

In chapter nine Paul concludes his thoughts on giving. Here in chapter ten, he shifts his focus to spiritual warfare. Paul gives instructions on waging war in the spiritual realm. This is essential when we are living for and serving Jesus Christ. In addition, Paul discusses God-ordained authority versus self-appointed leadership. One glorifies God, the other does not.

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 10.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 10:1-6.

1. In verse 1 we see that some of the Corinthians were accusing Paul saying he was very bold in his letters, but timid and weak in person. What was Paul's response to these allegations (vv.1-3)?

2. Paul reminds us that "...though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh" (v. 3). He then explains that *mighty spiritual weapons* are readily available to us for the spiritual battles we face daily. According to Ephesian 6:14-18, list the spiritual weapons available to us. These *weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God*.

3. Using some of your favorite commentaries (see pg. 2) describe the way these spiritual weapons work for each subject listed below (vv.4-5).

- Pulling down strongholds

- Casting down arguments against every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God

- Bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ

4. Give some examples of ways we might try to fight spiritual battles using *carnal* means?

5. Look again at Ephesians 6:10-20. Paul gives a discourse on the *Armor of God*. After reading, comment on how this passage relates to our text today.

6. Paul ends this section on spiritual warfare with an interesting statement. He declares, "...and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." What do you think Paul is communicating here?

Apart from a mighty awakening and revival in the church, we are fighting a losing battle because we are resisting on carnal levels.

Alan Redpath

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 10:7-11.

1. Paul's authority was being questioned (vv.7-10). What were these believers considering as evidence against Paul's authority? What proofs should have convinced them otherwise?

2. Who gave Paul his authority to lead (v.8)? What goal was to be accomplished by this God-given authority (vv.8-9)?

3. According to verses 10-11 how does Paul seem to handle their criticism? What did Paul assure them would happen when he/they arrived in person? What does this tell us about Paul's leadership ability?

But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.'

1 Samuel 16:7

4. Personal: Have you ever experienced this type of criticism when trying to serve with your whole heart? If so, how did you handle it? How has it effected your service? Did it ever cause you to quit?

5. Looking at Ephesians 4:11-12, who does God give to the church? What is their purpose?

6. Define *equipping* and *edifying* from Ephesians 4:12. Then, based on what you now know about the Apostle Paul, how is he *equipping* and *edifying* this flock?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 10:12-17.

1. Paul, perhaps sarcastically, points out that even though comparing oneself to others in ministry might make one feel important, it's ignorant! Apparently, these men were boasting of accomplishments made by others. What *limitations* does Paul offer for taking credit in ministry (v.13)?

2. According to 1 Peter 4:10, what are we to do with the gifts we've received from God?

3. In verses 14-15, Paul explains that he has been given a *God appointed sphere of authority* over these believers. However, there were limitations (boundaries) to his authority. What authority and limitations did Paul have? This God-given authority and the limitations of it inform us of Paul's leadership behavior. What might happen if a leader misunderstands the authority or limitations God has intended? This could be in the form of neglect or abdication on one hand, and tyrannic or oppressive on the other. Answer for both scenarios.

4. Paul understood that for the gospel to spread it takes men and women willing to do their part, generation after generation. He also understood that working on top of another man's foundation could be problematic. In your own words, what does he say about this (vv.14-16)?

5. Wrapping the chapter up, what does Paul conclude (vv.17-18)? Why is this important for every servant of the Lord to understand?

After all, who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only God's servants through whom you believed the Good News. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us. I planted the seed in your hearts, and Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. It's not important who does the planting, or who does the watering. What's important is that God makes the seed grow. The one who plants and the one who waters work together with the same purpose. And both will be rewarded for their own hard work. For we are both God's workers. And you are God's field. You are God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9 NLT

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

Digging Deeper (optional)

1. Paul talks about pulling down strongholds in verses 3-5. Do a word study for the following key words to help you gain insight into these strongholds.

- War

- Warfare

- Fortresses (NASB) Strongholds (NKJV)

- Destroying

- Speculations

- Thought

2. Now that you have looked at these words more in depth, share what may be strongholds in your life that you *war* against. Pray about these and ask the Lord for victory. Ask a fellow believer to pray along with you.

2 Corinthians 11

1 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! 5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things. 7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows! 12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. 16 I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. 17 What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. 19 For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise! 20 For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. 21 To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is

bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 30 If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity. 31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

Second Corinthians
Chapter Eleven

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 11.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Reread 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

Once again, Paul feels the need to defend his apostleship. He may be reluctant yet sees the value of addressing this again for the spiritual health and well-being of his Corinthian followers.

3. What did Paul say about his *jealousy* for these believers (v.2)? What is the difference between Godly jealousy and worldly jealousy?

4. What was Paul's *fear* for them (v.3)?

5. Paul knows people are easily influenced and felt the need to warn them about false teachers and false doctrine. What is Paul concerned they might, "well put up with" (v.4)?

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 11:5-15.

1. In verses 5-9, using the NLT, list several things Paul did or didn't do on behalf of these believers:

Paul did

Paul didn't

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2. In verse 10 Paul states, "As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting..." What reason does he give and what was Paul *boasting* about (vv.9-12)?

3. Paul warns of false teachers. What does he say about them in verse 13?

4. "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (v.14). These false apostles, like Satan, do not appear to us as evil and deceitful. These deceitful workers are people that are in the church. According to Paul, how do they present themselves to the church (v.15)? What are their consequences?

A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes.

Charles Spurgeon

5. How do the following verses relate to our text today?

- Acts 20:30

- Romans 16:18

- Galatians 1:7

- Galatians 4:17

- Ephesians 4:14

- Colossians 2:8

6. How can you protect yourself from half-truths when hearing the Word of God being taught?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 11:16-21.

1. In your own words, explain why Paul feels the need to go on this *boasting* rant (vv.16-21). Do you feel he is being serious, sarcastic, or something else?

2. In general, what are some reasons people of faith might succumb to false teachings? Does Paul give any hints as to why this could happen (vv.19-20)?

Whatever is only almost true is quite false, and among the most dangerous of errors, because being so near truth, it is the more likely to lead astray.

Henry Ward Beecher

3. Look up 1 Corinthians 3:18-20. What does Paul say about worldly wisdom?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 11:22-33.

Paul shares his sufferings with the believers in Corinth for the remainder of this chapter, giving us insight into the daily hardships and dangers he was willing to face in ministry.

- 1. List all the things Paul was willing to face for the sake of the gospel and his deep love for God (vv. 22-27). Can you personally identify with anything on Paul's list?

- 2. Paul clearly identifies the burden that, “comes upon him daily.” What is it (v.28)?

3. Look up the following verses, noting how Paul showed his concern for the churches in his care.

- Acts 15:36

- Acts 15:40-41

- Acts 18:23

- Acts 20:2

- Acts 20:18-32

4. Paul left an amazing legacy! Through all his sufferings, trials, persecutions, and hardships, he never gave up! What kind of legacy do you desire to leave behind? Take some time to really contemplate if what you're doing today will bring about your desired legacy in the future. Spend some time seeking the Lord.

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

2 Corinthians 12

1 It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: 2 I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. 6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. 7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 11 I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. 12 Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds. 13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong! 14 Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved. 16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! 17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps? 19 Again, do

you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification. 20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; 21 lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Twelve

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 12.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 12:1-6.

1. Paul decides it is time to move on from boasting to visions and revelations. What are the *visions* and *revelations* Paul is talking about (vv.1-6)?

2. Using your resources (see pg. 2), what does Paul mean by the phrase *third heaven* and *paradise* (vv.2,4)?

3. Define the word *inexpressible* from verse 4.

4. Paul concludes this section in verse 6 expressing why he wishes to refrain from boasting, even though he would be speaking truthfully. Why does he do this?

5. What are some reasons the Lord might share a word of knowledge or a revelation with us personally? Is there always a reason or need to share these things publicly?

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 12:7-13.

1. Paul received great revelations from God. Define *revelations* from verse 7. From memory, list some of the revelations Paul received.

2. Who gave Paul a “thorn in the flesh” and what purpose did it serve (v.7)?

3. Three times Paul begged God to take this from him. What was God’s response to Paul’s request (v.9)? Define *grace*.

4. Share a time when you felt particularly weak, yet God’s grace and strength carried you. What does it mean when Paul states, “that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (v.9)?

Great tribulation brings out the great strength of God. If you never feel inward conflicts and sinking of soul, you do not know much of the upholding power of God; but if you go down, down, into the depths of soul-anguish till the deep threatens to shut her mouth upon you, and then the Lord rides upon a cherub and does fly, yea, rides upon the wings of the wind and delivers your soul, and catches you away to the third heaven of delight, then you perceive the majesty of divine grace. Oh, there must be the weakness of man, felt, recognized, and mourned over, or else the strength of the Son of God will never be perfected in us.

Charles Spurgeon

5. What was Paul's response (v.10)? Why did Paul come to this conclusion?

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 12:14-21.

1. Once again, Paul shows his deep love and concern for the church. When coming to the Corinthians for the third time he reminds them he will not be a burden to them. What reasoning did he give for this statement (v.14)?

2. What is Paul willing to do for them (v.15)? Define *spend* and *be spent*. What observation does Paul make (v.15)?

3. Paul was willing to give all to serve the body of Christ. How are you willing to spend and be spent for the sake of the body of Christ, His church? Take some time to prayerfully and carefully contemplate this today.

It is the privilege of the Churches of Christ to support the ministry of his Gospel among them. Those who do not contribute their part to the support of the gospel ministry either care nothing for it or derive no good from it.

Adam Clarke

4. In verses 16-19, Paul once again must defend himself to some of the Corinthian believers. What is he being accused of this time?

5. Paul assures the believers he is not defending himself, rather he shares his true motivation for *everything he does*. What is it (v.19)?

6. What was Paul afraid he would find when he arrived for the third time (vv.20-21)?
What does he say they won't like (v.20)?

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. Choose one question from this week's lesson that stood out to you and explain why.

2. Are there any situations where you can apply what you've learned this week?

3. Did you struggle to understand any part of this week's lesson?

2 Corinthians 13

1 This will be the third time I am coming to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.” 2 I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare— 3 since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you. 4 For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. 5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified. 6 But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified. 7 Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 9 For we are glad when we are weak, and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete. 10 Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction. 11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the saints greet you. 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Second Corinthians

Chapter Thirteen

Paul concludes his letter to the Corinthian Church with some final advice. He longs for them to walk worthy so he will not have to exercise his authority with severity when he comes. He warns them again regarding sin; reminding them of Christ's power within them. He encourages a self-examination to test genuine faith and ends by praying for their maturity with a desire to strengthen this body of believers. Paul was a true spiritual father to these people, mission accomplished!

Day 1: Prayerfully and carefully read 2 Corinthians 13.

1. In your own words, how would you describe this chapter to someone else?

2. List any major themes, words, phrases, or verses in this chapter that stand out to you and explain why.

Day 2: Reread 2 Corinthians 13:1-4.

On his first visit to Corinth, Paul founded the church and stayed a year and six months (Acts 18:11). His second visit was brief and painful. It occurred in-between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. Now he is prepared to come for a third time.

1. In verse 1 Paul quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. After a brief study, share why you think Paul cited this verse.

2. Paul uses some very strong language in verse 2 stating, "I will not spare." Define the word *spare*, then share your thoughts about why Paul might come with severity this time.

3. Who does Paul point to as the power and proof of his leadership (vv.3-4)?

4. Challenge: Using your resources (see pg. 2) determine what *authoritarian* leadership could possibly produce in followers of Christ. Now, compare the contrasting idea of passive leadership and note possible outcomes for this manner of leading as well. Are either of these methods of leadership godly?

5. Though similar, Christian leadership and secular leadership are very different. What does it mean to be a servant-leader? Share three key scriptures that either define or demonstrate servant leadership.

Day 3: Reread 2 Corinthians 13:5-10.

1. Using the NLT, what did Paul instruct the believers to do (v.5)? Why did he instruct them in this way? Could their outcomes be a result of Paul's leadership in their lives (vv.5-6)?

2. Look up the following verses and note what each says about examining one's heart.

- Psalm 17:3

- Psalm 26:2

- Psalm 139:23-24

- Lamentations 3:40

- 1 Corinthians 11:28-31

- 1 John 3:19-22

- Revelation 2:5

3. Paul seems to prefer gentleness. How does he convey his heart for their spiritual well-being (v.7)?

Now, 'prove yourselves.' Do not merely sit in your closet and look at yourselves alone but go out into this busy world and see what kind of piety you have. Remember, many a man's religion will stand examination that will not stand proof. We may sit at home and look at our religion, and say, 'Well, I think this will do!'

Charles Spurgeon

4. Paul adheres to one boundary he will not cross in his leadership. What is it (v.8)?

5. Paul sought to use his authority for the benefit of these believers. He was even willing to appear weak for their sake (v.9). According to verse 10 what did Paul want to accomplish with his God given authority?

Day 4: Reread 2 Corinthians 13:11-14.

1. What is Paul’s desire for all the believers in Corinth (vv.11-14)? Are you experiencing these results in your life?

2. Paul made the same promise in Philippians 4:9. What was the condition?

3. What do you notice in verse 14?

For a Christian is one who seeks and enjoys the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost.

Charles Hodge

Day 5: Group discussion questions.

1. How did God personally speak to you while studying the book of 2 Corinthians?
What are some of your major takeaways?

2. What new study habits did you gain during these last several months?

3. What did you learn about Jesus as you studied this book?

Digging Deeper (optional)

Now that you have completed your study of 2 Corinthians, it is time to *put it all together*. Construct an outline of the book or try creating a chapter theme chart. Be sure to choose a *key verse* for every chapter. This would be a verse that helps you remember the theme of each one.

What a powerful letter from the depths of Paul’s heart! What was your favorite verse from 2 Corinthians, a verse that spoke to you? Write it out here.

LIFE OF PAUL

Timeline

AD 5	Approximate year of birth of Saul of Tarsus (now eastern Turkey). Saul was born to an Israelite family who came from a tribe of Benjamin. He is a Roman citizen who is also referred to as Paul. – <u>Philippians 3:5</u>
AD 15-20	Saul trains with Gamaliel I at the Pharisaic Rabbinical school to become a Pharisee. – <u>Acts 22:3</u> ; <u>26:5</u> ; <u>Galatians 1:14</u>
AD 30	Paul begin persecuting the Christian Church found in Jerusalem. He brings them to jail and calls for them to be stoned to death if found guilty of “blasphemy”. – <u>Acts 8:1-3</u> ; <u>Acts 26:10</u>
AD 32	Paul witnesses the stoning of Stephen, an apostle of Jesus Christ. – <u>Acts 7:58</u>
AD 33	Paul journeys to Damascus. He hears the voice of Jesus and is blinded on his way to Damascus to persecute more Christians. He does not eat or drink for three days. A disciple named Ananias has a vision from Jesus and visits Saul to restore his sight. – <u>Acts 9:1-19</u> ; <u>Acts 22:6-21</u> ; <u>Acts 26:12-18</u> .
	Paul makes his way to Arabia and lives there for three years. – <u>2 Corinthians 11:32</u> ; <u>Galatians 1:17</u>
AD 36	Paul travels to Damascus once again but is forced to flee due to persecution. He returns to Damascus then exits the city for safety. – <u>Galatians 1:17</u> ; <u>Acts 9:20-25</u> ; <u>2 Corinthians 11:32-33</u>
AD 37	Paul leaves for Jerusalem and meets the other Apostles. – <u>Acts 9:26-29</u> ; <u>Galatians 1:18</u>
AD 38–44	Paul stays in Tarsus and areas nearby, preaching Jesus’ teachings. – <u>Acts 9:30</u>
AD 44–46	Barnabas, a Cypriot Jew, visits Paul and they both preach in Antioch.
AD 47	Agabus, a Christian follower, foresees a famine in Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas coordinate to send supplies to Jerusalem. – <u>Acts 11:29-30</u>
	They both return to Antioch with John Mark, one of the Apostles of Jesus.
	Paul and Barnabas are told by the Holy Spirit to to start their missionary journey. – <u>Acts 13:2-3</u>

AD 48	Paul and Barnabas start their first missionary journey, traveling to Cyprus. While there, they preach at Salamis and Paphos. – <u>Acts 13:5-12</u>
	They leave for Perga of Pamphylia. This is where John Mark returns home – Acts 13:13
	Paul and Barnabas go to preach in Antioch of Pisidia. – Acts 13:14-50
	The pair visited Iconium but in fear of being stoned, they left for Lystra where Paul is able to heal a crippled man. The people who witnessed the miracle attempted to worship them as if they were gods. – Acts 14:6-7
	The Jews found them and stoned them. Paul's lifeless body was supposedly brought out of Lystra, but both he and Barnabas were able to go back to the city alive. They left for Derbe the next day and preach the gospel there. – Acts 14:20-21
	The pair retrace their steps, going back to Lystra, Iconium, and reaching Antioch. They established ministries in the places they had visited before. – Acts 14:21-24
	Paul and Barnabas return to Syrian Antioch. – Acts 14:26
AD 49	Paul and Barnabas join and meet the Council at Jerusalem. – Acts 15:1-29; Galatians 2:1
	After the meeting, Paul told Barnabas that they were to revisit their growing Christians Churches. They are to embark on Paul's second missionary journey. However, Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark along; but Paul was against the idea. – Acts 15:36-39
	Consequently, Barnabas went with John Mark to Cyprus while Paul went with Silas to Syria and Cilicia. – Acts 15:36-39, 41
AD 50	Paul and Silas travel to Derbe and Lystra. Timothy accompanies them. They strengthen the ministry in these areas. – Acts 16:1-5
AD 51	Paul, Silas, and Timothy continue in their renewing of Christian faith journeying to Troas, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, and Apollonia. – Acts 16:1-5; Acts 17:1
	Paul, Silas, and Timothy reached Macedonia. Their first convert in Europe was Lydia, who was a slave girl who they saved from a demon. This act had them put in jail; however, Paul and Silas were able to convert the keeper of the prison. – Acts 16:16-25

	They left Philippi and went to Thessalonica. They once again had to escape due to the commotion their presence had upon the Jews there.
AD 52	The group went to Berea where Silas and Timothy chose to stay. Paul left for Athens and then Corinth where they all reunited. – Acts 17:10-14; Acts 18:1-17
AD 53	Paul goes back to Antioch before his third missionary journey. – Acts 18:18-22
	He embarks on his third missionary journey. He starts with Galatia and Phrygia.
AD 54-55	Paul heads to Ephesus and baptizes a few followers there. He then starts a ministry in the area.
AD 56	Paul strengthens the ministries in Macedonia, Greece, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, and Trogyllium, Miletus, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea. – Acts 20:1-38; Acts 21: 1-14
AD 57	Paul is able to return to Jerusalem. He has a conflict with Jews at a Temple. He is placed in prison for preaching. His citizenship as a Roman saved him; they were about to scourge him. – Act 22:25-26
	Paul was taken to speak in front of the Sanhedrin, an assembly of Jewish leading scholars that formed an official council. – Acts 22:30 – 23:10
	The Jews plot to kill Paul. – Act 23:12-22
	The Lord tells Paul he will be his witness in Rome. – Act 23:11
	While he is imprisoned Paul spoke with many leaders who will decide his fate. He first goes before Felix, the governor of Judea and Samaria. – Acts 24
	Paul next faces Festus who replaces Felix. – Acts 25
	After this, Paul is before King Agrippa. He is sent to Rome. – Acts 26:1-29
AD 60	Paul reaches Rome. He calls on the chief of the Jews and speaks to them. He is safe in Malta where he has a home and preaches without conflicts. – Acts 28:30-31
AD 62	Paul is released from Roman captivity. He continues on his missionary work.
AD 67 or 68	Paul dies possibly as a martyr during the time of Emperor Nero.