

SUFFERING

How To Get Up When Life Beats You Down



Reading Plan

Week 1

Monday 10/09

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

What is the connection between “suffering” and “comfort,” and why does that matter?

Tuesday 10/10

2 Corinthians 1:12-22

Paul claims that his attitude, words and behavior toward the Corinthians have been totally consistent with his message. How well would you do on that standard?

Wednesday 10/11

2 Corinthians 1:23 – 2:4

In 1 Corinthians, Paul had to say some difficult things to some folks who were out of line. But he did it out of love and now he is trying to continue to build bridges. Are there any hard things we need to say or bridges we need to build, or rebuild?

Thursday 10/12

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Paul says that when one of us is in pain, we all suffer. How well do we recognize that our outcomes are all connected to each other? Do we really hurt when others in our community hurt and do we rejoice with them as well? Do we offer forgiveness to keep our community whole?

Friday 10/13

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

We all have an aroma. It is easy to respond well to those who appreciate the “aroma of Christ” in us, but what happens when they say we smell like death to them?

Use the weekend to catch up and revisit something that stood out, challenged, or stretched you.

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Reading Plan

Week 2

Monday 10/16 2 Corinthians 3:1-6

If our testimony for Christ is found in the lives of those we have discipled/influence, what do people think of Christ because of that? Also, are we relying on our own efforts for this or do we trust in the Holy Spirit to accomplish it through us?

Tuesday 10/17 2 Corinthians 3:7-18

If the true Glory of God and Christ is hidden (veiled) from us, what is that veil made of? Unbelief? Self-interest? Fear? Laziness? What do you need to do to remove that veil?

Wednesday 10/18 2 Corinthians 4:1-6

How do we go about in our efforts to share the Good News with others? Do we use the same marketing techniques as Amazon or Facebook? Or do we make open statements about the truth? What can we do to lift the veil that hides the truth from those who need the Gospel?

Thursday 10/19 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

How much are we willing to be “afflicted in every way” so that “the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies?” How do we focus on those unseen, eternal things to keep from loosing heart?

Friday 10/20 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

How do we live so that we are constantly aware of our “home, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?” What can we do that keeps us focused on eternity so we are not overwhelmed by the current mess?

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Reading Plan

Week 3

Monday 10/23 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

How do we go from “regarding people according to the flesh” (earthly, tangible), and see them as potentially “new creations” destined for eternity with God?

Tuesday 10/24 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

How can we find that balance that lets us be “sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things?” Can we open our hearts to live like that? How can we do that in our everyday life?

Wednesday 10/25 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1

What does it mean to live fully in this world and yet manage to keep separate from the “unclean thing?”

Thursday 10/26 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

How far are you willing to go, how much hardship are you willing to endure to see “Christ formed” in others? Is that enough to give you great comfort and something to rejoice in?

Friday 10/27 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Do we give out of our leftovers? Out of our abundance? Or do we, should we, give beyond our means to see God provide for others through us as well as God providing for us?

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Reading Plan

Week 4

Monday 10/30 **2 Corinthians 8:16-24**

Titus has a great reputation for integrity. If people were asked about our reputation, personal or as a faith community, what would they say?

Tuesday 10/31 **2 Corinthians 9:1-5**

How well do you prepare for times when extra generosity is needed? Are you able to step up when the unexpected requires special resources?

Wednesday 11/01 **2 Corinthians 9:6-15**

How hilarious are you while you are giving? God loves great joy in giving. And . . . if we expect to have a bountiful harvest, we need to sow bountifully – that means putting it out there and letting it go so it can grow and return. Do we let go or hold on expecting a return without ever letting go?

Thursday 11/02 **2 Corinthians 10:1-18**

Paul exhorts us to “take every thought captive to obey Christ.” How well are we doing that? Throughout the day, what is our mind really dwelling on? Food? Social media? Comfort of convenience? Irritation? What can we do to make sure our thoughts line up with the mind of Christ?

Friday 11/03 **2 Corinthians 11:1-11**

Paul was fierce in his desire for the Corinthians to remain true to the Gospel. How fiercely do you present the Gospel? And how fiercely do you hang onto those you have worked to help bring to faith?

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Reading Plan

Week 5

Monday 11/06

2 Corinthians 11:12-21

Paul warns us of false apostles and deceitful workmen. Today, what do those folks look like? What should we do about them? Paul goes on to talk about boasting and being foolish. Is it always wrong to boast, especially about ourselves? Is there ever a time when we should?

Tuesday 11/07

2 Corinthians 11:22-33

Paul has a long list of hardships he has endured. Not many of us have had to undergo such things. At what point would you say "It just isn't worth it?"

Wednesday 11/08

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Some people claim that if we have enough faith, God will cure any ailment we have. How does that fit with Paul's plea for God to remove Paul's "thorn in the flesh?" Do we really recognize how weak we are and take comfort in that since that means it is God's power, not ours? Are you content with being powerless and relying on God's power?

Thursday 11/09

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Paul was threatening a third trip to Corinth to try and help them get straightened out. If Paul came to **River Rock**, what would he need to tell us? How would we receive it?

Friday 11/10

2 Corinthians 13:1-14

Paul urges us to examine ourselves. Most of us are either far too generous in our examinations (meaning we come out looking better than we should) or far too harsh (meaning we tend to make ourselves feel far worse than we are). How do we find that balance that allows us to come to an accurate assessment when we examine ourselves?

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