

**Adult  
Bible Study  
in  
Simplified  
English**  
•  
**Study  
Guide**



# 2 Corinthians

*TAKING MINISTRY PERSONALLY*

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Sewell**

BAPTISTWAY PRESS  
Dallas, Texas

# **ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH**

## **Study Guide**

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### **2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally**

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## 2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally

The Apostle Paul wrote two letters to the church at Corinth. This city is in the south part of Greece along a great trade route. People from many countries worked in Corinth. Many believed in false gods. Corinth was a very wicked city. Paul led many to faith in Jesus Christ. He lived there for at least a year and one-half. Paul wrote them at least two letters. Each letter taught them how to be more like Jesus.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul talked about their distrust in his leadership. He also talked about heaven and the Holy Spirit showing us the way in our lives. The Apostle also wrote about giving and suffering for the cause of Jesus Christ. This letter makes is good for us today. We have the same problems. We need to follow these teachings.

### **Unit 1—Ministry to People Who Disagree** (2 Corinthians 1-7).

Lesson 1: When You Suffer (2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

Lesson 2: When Friendships Are Broken (2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11)

Lesson 3: All Christians Are Ministers (2 Corinthians 2:14-3:18)

Lesson 4: God Can Use Weak People (2 Corinthians 4:1-15)

Lesson 5: Our Faith Gives Us Hope Forever (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10)

Lesson 6: Motivated to Ministry (2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

Lesson 7: Open Up Your Heart (2 Corinthians 6:1-13; 7:2-4)

Lesson 8: Sorrow that Leads to Joy (2 Corinthians 7:5-16)

### **Unit 2—Learning to Give** (2 Corinthians 8-9)

Lesson 9: Be a Good Giver (2 Corinthians 8:1-21)

Lesson 10: We Can Give Since God Gives (2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

### **Unit 3—Doing Better Than The Usual** (2 Corinthians 10-13)

Lesson 11: Boast in God, Not in Yourself (2 Corinthians 10:1-18)

Lesson 12: Jesus' Help is All We Need (2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10)

Lesson 13: God's Love Helps People Change (2 Corinthians 12:14-13:11)

*2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally*

# Word List

## Lesson 1

**ministry:** the act of helping others  
**pressures:** troubles that are very difficult  
**spiritual:** of the spirit or soul, not of the body or things you can see  
**support:** special help as in helping someone by praying for them; prayer support

## Lesson 2

**respond:** to answer in words or by action  
**relate:** to show some understanding of or have a friendship with; relationship with  
**sure:** unfailing, without doubt, certain

## Lesson 3

**purpose:** what one plans to get or to do; a goal  
**comparison:** to describe two things as being alike or not alike  
**sacrifices:** animal offerings to God, often burned  
**reflect:** to show the likeness of something; as a mirror shows back an image

## Lesson 4

**excited:** having strong feelings; here good feelings of happiness  
**confuse:** to mix up, especially in the mind  
**courage:** being able to have less fear in danger, pain, or trouble; being brave  
**eternity:** the endless time after death

## Lesson 5

**boldly:** easily ready for possible danger  
**logic:** way of thinking in order, not in a confused way  
**reward(ed):** given something in return for good deeds

## Lesson 6

**motivated:** to have a feeling that makes one want to do something  
**harmful:** hurts or gives a lot of pain  
**guides:** shows the right way; leads those who follow

# Word List

## Lesson 7:

**challenged:** strongly asked for action

**disappointments:** things that are not what is hoped for

**extreme:** very great, more than the most

**content:** happy with what one has; not wanting anything else

## Lesson 8

**correct: (verb)** to make sad to help turn from sin, ask to change something bad

**self-centered:** thinking mostly about oneself

**loyal:** loving someone in good and bad times

## Lesson 9

**pity:** sadness for another person's suffering or trouble

**opinion:** what one person thinks or believes

**faithful:** loyal to someone or something as in loyal to the faith

## Lesson 10

**blesse:** gives happiness or good things

**results:** things caused by something else; what happens because of something

**centuries:** groups of 100 years; 3 centuries is 300 years

## Lesson 11

**boast:** to talk with too much pride

**glorify:** cause to be respected, praised, worshiped

**criticize:** to say mean things about; give a bad opinion about

## Lesson 12

**depend:** to trust in

**bother:** to annoy; to cause worry or trouble

**struggles:** difficult troubles

**seizures:** a sudden attack of illness such as fainting

## Lesson 13

**convince:** to make someone who is not sure feel sure about something

**divided:** not agreeing, separated by problems

# 2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally

## Unit 1

Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English

Ministering To People  
Who Disagree  
(2 Corinthians 1-7)

### Lesson 1

God Helps When You Suffer  
(2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

### Lesson 2

When Friendships are Broken  
(2 Corinthians 1:12-2:11)

### Lesson 3

All Christians are Ministers  
(2 Corinthians 2:14-3:18)

### Lesson 4

God Can Use Weak People  
(2 Corinthians 4:1-15)

### Lesson 5

Our Faith Gives Us  
Hope Forever  
(2 Corinthians 4:16-5:10)

### Lesson 6

Motivated to Ministry  
(2 Corinthians 5:11-21)

### Lesson 7

Open Up Your Heart  
(2 Corinthians 6:1-13; 7:2-4)

### Lesson 8

Sorrow that Leads to Joy  
(2 Corinthians 7:5-16)

## MINISTERING TO PEOPLE WHO DISAGREE

**I**t's easy to see that people are different. Even family members have different ideas about what is funny. Loved ones react to life in various ways. So it is easy to see how people can disagree. They don't look at life in the same way. Christians can help people understand each other when they disagree.

Jesus asks us to be loving and concerned about our neighbors. He taught us to love everyone and that means our enemies too. We can **minister** to people who disagree. God gives us the wisdom to help people with their differences.

We can thank God for the ability to be peace makers. We can show Jesus in our lives. Our hard work will help people with their disagreements. Christ will receive the honor through our hard work.

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*Adult Bible Study in  
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### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

### **Memory Verse**

“As we have suffered much for Christ and have shared in His pain, we also share His great comfort”  
(2 Corinthians 1:5)

### **Word List**

**ministry:** the act of helping others

**pressures:** troubles that are very difficult

**spiritual:** of the spirit or soul, not of the body or things you can see

**support:** special help as in helping someone by praying for them; prayer support

# God Helps When You Suffer

Paul writes to the believers at Corinth for the second time. There are many things he wants to discuss. He first wants them to understand how God’s comfort works. We are most able to feel God’s comfort when we suffer. **Pressures** of life make us more open to God’s work.

God cares for us during the difficult times of life. He wants us to care for others in the same way that He cares for us. We can help others during their times of problems. Through our help, Jesus is honored and people will see Jesus Christ in us.

## **Nothing is better than loving-favor and peace**

**(2 Corinthians 1:1–7)**

Paul greets the Corinth church with the words “loving-favor and peace.” Since the believers have had problems, they needed much loving-favor and peace. Paul knows how the Corinth church has suffered. He is sure that God will bring good to them. He says that God can give them all the loving-favor and peace they need. God brings good to us so we can bring good to others .

God is the Father of loving-kindness as written in verse 3. We may not quickly see His caring, but it is still there. As we

**Things To  
Think About**

1. Can you give some examples of how God helped you when problems came into your life?

2. Have you ever helped others and they could see God working in your life?

grow in Christ, we can more easily see His loving-kindness. We can be like Jesus, helping others. God expects us to show the same kind of loving-kindness to others. In that way, we are sharing the light of Jesus to hurting people.

We have a most high place in God's world. We get to show what He is like to those who do not believe. We are on His walking sales staff, sharing His news.

Paul states in verse 7 that he has hope for the church at Corinth. Hope will wash away sadness and hopelessness. Paul is sure that these believers will find comfort, since they patiently waited and trusted God during the tough times.

**Prayer makes all the difference (1:8–11)**

Paul did not have an easy life in his work for God. In verse 8, Paul tells them about his fears and troubles. Paul even thought he would lose his life. He had a lot of problems and did not know where to turn. Thankfully, Paul did not give up hope. He firmly put his faith in the power of Jesus. Paul even told the Corinthian church again about the power of Jesus to raise people from the dead. There is no greater earthly power than that. We know God can bring someone back to life. So, we know He can take care of any of our problems.

Paul talks strongly about the importance of prayer. Of course we should pray for our own needs. Also, we can and

should pray for others. This becomes a joy and not a problem. Verse 11 says that Paul was helped by their prayers. This comes from a man with **spiritual** eyes and ears. Paul could sense God's power because of their prayer **support**. They did not have to be with Paul to be of help. They could pray from miles away. God would hear the prayers and give strength to Paul.

Paul says the final outcome will be a happy one. Since people prayed, God gave good to them. Soon everyone will see the good. The proof of God's work is seen. Without prayer support, there is little hope and power. With prayer support, Paul knows he will be delivered again and again. The idea of "being delivered" is important for Christians. We remember this word from the Lord's Prayer (or Model Prayer). Look in your Bibles at Matthew 6:13. This special prayer is part of the Sermon on the Mount (or Teaching on the Mountain). Jesus gives us a simple but strong prayer. We are told to pray so that we are kept

(delivered) from sin.

We live in a world that has both good and bad. It is not hard to find bad. We are tempted all the time. We can do many bad things if we fail to follow Jesus. This is sin. Our Lord tells us to ask God to deliver us from sin. Paul tells them to pray so that he would be delivered. Prayer makes the difference in how strong we live for Jesus.

We can thank God for the comfort He brings us during tough times. And we can be helpers to other believers through prayer. God always shows us His love even when things are very bad in the world all around us.

## 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

**1** This letter is from Paul. I have been chosen by God to be a missionary for Jesus Christ. Timothy is here with me and is writing to you also. We are writing to God's church in the city of Corinth and to all of God's people in the country of Greece.

**2** May you have loving-favor and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3** We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Father Who shows us loving-kindness and our God Who gives us comfort.

**4** He gives us comfort in all our troubles. Then we can comfort other people who have the same troubles. We give the same kind of comfort God gives us.

**5** As we have suffered much for Christ and have shared in His pain, we also share His great comfort.

**6** But if we are in trouble, it is for your good. And it is so you will be saved from the punishment of sin. If God comforts us, it is for your good also. You too will be

given strength not to give up when you have the same kind of trouble we have.

**7** Our hope for you is the same all the time. We know you are sharing our troubles. And so you will share the comfort we receive.

**8** We want you to know, Christian brothers, of the trouble we had in the countries of Asia. The load was so heavy we did not have the strength to keep going. At times we did not think we could live.

**9** We thought we would die. This happened so we would not put our trust in ourselves, but in God Who raises the dead.

**10** Yes, God kept us from what looked like sure death and He is keeping us. As we trust Him, He will keep us in the future.

**11** You also help us by praying for us. Many people thank God for His favor to us. This is an answer to the prayers of many people.



Lesson  
2  
*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians 1:12 -  
2:11

### Memory Verse

“ God is the One Who makes our faith and your faith strong in Christ. He has set us apart for Himself.”  
(2 Corinthians 1:21)

### Word List

**respond:** to answer in words or by action

**relate:** to show some understanding of or have a friendship with; relationship with

**sure:** unflinching, without doubt, certain

# Working With Others In Tough Times

Paul had to explain what he did and tell about the reasons. He always tried to do what Jesus would do. Paul talked about hard things such as how the church should take care of its own problems. He told the reader again that Jesus does what the Heavenly Father promises.

### **God changes our plans**

**(2 Corinthians 1:12–22)**

Paul gives the believers some good news. They can understand spiritual ideas that come from Paul. They can **respond** to God for themselves. Paul treats them as important to the faith. Every believer is important, today and in the past. Every believer can **relate** to God by himself or herself (read the second chapter of Ephesians to better understand this truth).

Paul had to tell the believers again about his good ministry. He had no guilt feelings about his work for the Lord. He always tried to do the right thing. Some people didn't think that Paul was a good leader. Paul believed his work was only to honor Jesus Christ. He felt good about his work for Jesus. He saw the power of God work in his life many times.

Paul wanted all the believers at Corinth to understand him. He told them that God gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 22). God's Spirit allows us to feel Him in our lives. And

**Things To  
Think About**

1. Look at the ways you work out problems with others. Are you doing it the way Jesus wants?
2. Are you trying to be patient and loving?

the Spirit makes our future **sure** in the love of Christ. Many other Bible passages help us sense God's sure love. John 10:14 tells us that Jesus knew His sheep and they knew Him. Isn't it wonderful to hear that Christ knows us? Are we not happy to be able to know Him?

**Thinking about what is best (1:23–2:4)**

Paul knew that if he visited Corinth, there would be pain. Paul would have to work with some hard problems and this would hurt. So, he decided to write this letter to tell about what troubled him. Paul knew the believers at Corinth would be more like Jesus after reading these words. Are we more like Jesus when we read God's Word? Do we practice reading God's Word every day? If you don't, find a time and spot to begin. Your life will change just because you listen closely to what you read.

Years later, God moved holy men to place Paul's second letter to Corinth in the Bible. They knew the words of Paul were guided by the Holy Spirit. This letter speaks to all churches and not only to the Corinthian church.

Paul had a great love for the Corinthian believers. That is why he wrote the letter. We must ask ourselves how much we love other people. Do we only talk to them? Can we write them a letter to tell them about our love? Would such a letter send a strong message to those loved ones?

## Getting right with each other

(2:5-11)

Paul talks about a person who has hurt the church. This pain also troubled Paul. The church punished the man. Now, the church needs to forgive him and keep going. Paul joins them in being forgiving. Paul says that they all need to move on and not fall into Satan's traps.

Paul says that we know how Satan works. Satan will try to ruin us when we have problems with other believers. Paul knows the importance of forgiveness. We stop the power of Satan when we love and forgive, like Jesus does. Again, we see in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) that we are to forgive others. We forgive because we also have received God's forgiveness. We would not be true to Jesus if we did not give forgiveness. Find new ways to forgive in the name of Jesus Christ!

## 2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:11

**12** I am happy to say this. Whatever we did in this world, and for sure when we were with you, we were honest and had pure desires. We did not trust in human wisdom.

Our power came from God's loving-favor.

**13** We write to you only what we know you can understand. I hope you will understand everything.

**14** When the Lord Jesus comes again, you can be as proud of us as we will be proud of you. Right now you do not understand us real well.

**15** It was because of this, I wanted to visit you first. In that way, you would be helped two times.

**16** I wanted to stop to visit you on my way to the country of Macedonia. I would stop again as I came from there. Then you could help me on my way to the country of Judea.

**17** Yes, I changed my mind. Does that show that I change my mind a lot? Do I plan things as people of the world who say yes when they mean no? You know I am not like that!

**18** As God is true, my yes means yes. I am not the kind of person who says one thing and means another.

**19** Timothy and Silvanus and I have preached to you about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In Him there is no yes and no. In Him is yes.

**20** Jesus says yes to all of God's many promises. It is through Jesus that we say, "Let it be so," when we give thanks to God.

**21** God is the One Who makes our faith and your faith strong in Christ. He has set us apart for Himself.

**22** He has put His mark on us to show we belong to Him. His Spirit is in our hearts to prove this.

**23** I call on God to look into my heart. The reason I did not come to the city of Corinth was because I did not want my strong words to hurt you.

**24** We are not the boss of your faith but we are working with you to make you happy. Your faith is strong.

**2:1** As I thought about it, I decided I would not come to you again. It would only make you sad.

**2** If I make you sad, who is going to make me happy? How can you make me happy if I make you sad?

**3** That is why I wrote that letter to you. I did not want to visit you and be made sad by the

ones who should be making me happy. I am sure when I am happy, you are happy also.

**4** I wrote you with a troubled heart. Tears were coming from my eyes. I did not want to make you sad. I wanted you to know how much I loved you.

**5** If someone among you has brought sorrow, he has not made me as sad as he has all of you. I say this so I may not make it hard for you.

**6** Most of you have punished him. That is enough for such a person.

**7** Now you should forgive him and comfort him. If you do not, he will be so sad that he will want to give up.

**8** I ask you to show him you do love him.

**9** This is why I wrote to you. I wanted to test you to see if you were willing to obey in all things.

**10** If you forgive a man, I forgive him also. If I have forgiven anything, I have done it because of you. Christ sees me as I forgive.

**11** We forgive so that Satan will not win. We know how he works!



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians

2:14 – 3:18

### **Memory Verse**

“We speak without fear because our trust is in Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 3:12)

### **Word List**

**purpose:** what one plans to get or to do; a goal

**comparison:** to describe two things as being alike or not alike

**sacrifices:** animal offerings to God, often burned

**reflect:** to show the likeness of something; as a mirror shows back an image

# All Christians are Ministers

Paul was happy and thankful that he could tell others about Christ. He showed his thankfulness and told others that God made him happy in his work. We have a most wonderful chance to minister to others too. This ministry is different than any job in the world.

### **The joy of speaking for God (2:14–3:3)**

We have a special role as Christians. We serve others as we obey God. This is the idea of ministry. All believers should do this. Verse 14 says that God’s words are spoken through us. He uses normal people to do His work. We should sense a great honor in this work.

Verses 15 and 16 tell us about life and death. We help people understand that Jesus saves. There is no hope after death without Him. In verse 17 Paul says that it is not our **purpose** to make money. People try to make money in all ways, including religion. We can pay pastors for their good work. People should serve Christ without asking for payment. We serve because we love Him, not because it is a job.

The first three verses of Chapter 3 are very interesting. Paul tells the Corinthians again that special written letters about them are not needed. Their friendship is real and strong. Paul adds the nice idea that the letter is written on his heart. You do not need to show any letter telling about your love for your family. You show it with your life. We do not write a letter about our love for the family of believers. We show it in our

**Things To**  
**Think About**

1. What are the ways I should help others?
2. Am I doing this for the right reasons?
3. Can I do a better job in ministry?
4. Do I understand ministry to be for all believers?
5. Why do some Christians think the pastor is the only minister?
6. How does the Holy Spirit help me to minister?

actions of support for the church. We do not write letters to lost people. We show them Jesus through our words and our actions. We truly become the letters for all to see.

**God gives something that lasts (3:4-11)**

Sometimes we doubt that God can work through us. We may think we have no right to serve God because we sin many times. Paul writes in verse 5 that our right to tell about Jesus comes from God Himself. It is true. We are not good enough on our own. Thank God that we can tell about Christ because of His power working within us. God has no perfect servants in this world. He only has Christians who want to be used by Him.

Paul uses the Old Testament to make a **comparison** in verses 7 through 11. He talks about the shining-greatness seen in Moses' face. This happened after Moses spent time with God. Paul then tells the believers that they can have a greater shining-greatness. This new and greater shining-greatness comes because of Jesus Christ. People can have forgiveness through Christ. There are no animal **sacrifices** needed. The Son of Man, Jesus, went to the cross to be the last sacrifice. His willing death paid for our sin. Paul says that we now can have much more shining-greatness. So there is no good comparison between the law of the past and the loving-favor of today.

**God's Spirit makes us free (3:12-18)**

Everyone wants to be free. Many people feel chained to something. Few people can sleep easily at night because of

worries. Paul says in verses 12 – 15 that many people still live in an Old Testament world. They think of God as an angry judge. They do not understand His love. Verse 16 shows that life is different for anyone who comes to Christ in faith. There is no cover to divide the people from God. We can know God's love and forgiveness in Jesus.

Paul tells everyone about a wonderful new freedom for the believer in verse 17. He says strongly that we can grow as Christians. God helps us to be more like Him. This brings us a special joy. We can better **reflect** God's shining-greatness along the way. We grow more in Jesus the more we learn and depend on Him. We can serve Jesus better and better as we grow up in Him.

Paul talks to the believers again about the source of the power. The special shining-greatness we can enjoy comes from God's Spirit. We can take no praise for the new life. God gives it to us freely. He gives us strength and wisdom. He gets the praise for all that happens!

## 2 Corinthians 2:14 – 3:18

**14** We thank God for the power Christ has given us. He leads us and makes us win in everything. He speaks through us wherever we go. The Good News is like a sweet smell to those who hear it.

**15** We are a sweet smell of Christ that reaches up to God. It reaches out to those who are being saved from the punishment of sin and to those who are still lost in sin.

**16** It is the smell of death to those who are lost in sin. It is the smell of life to those who are being saved from the punishment of sin. Who is able for such a work?

**17** We are not like others. They preach God's Word to make money. We are men of truth and have been sent by God. We speak God's Word with Christ's power. All the time God sees us.

**3:1** Are we making it sound as if we think we are so important? Other people write letters about themselves. Do we need to write such a letter to you?

**2** You are our letter. You are written in our hearts. You are known and read by all men.

**3** You are as a letter from Christ written by us. You are not written as other letters are written with ink, or on pieces of stone. You

are written in human hearts by the Spirit of the living God.

**4** We can say these things because of our faith in God through Christ.

**5** We know we are not able in ourselves to do any of this work. God makes us able to do these things.

**6** God is the One Who made us preachers of a New Way of Worship. This New Way of Worship is not of the Law. It is of the Holy Spirit. The Law brings death, but the Holy Spirit gives life.

**7** The Law of Moses was written on stone and it brought death. But God's shining-greatness was seen when it was given.

When Moses took it to the Jews, they could not look at his face because of the bright light. But that bright light in his face began to pass away.

**8** The new way of life through the Holy Spirit comes with much more shining-greatness.

**9** If the Law of Moses, that leads to death, came in shining-greatness, how much greater and brighter is the light that makes us right with God?

**10** The Law of Moses came with shining-greatness long ago. But that light is no longer bright. The shining-greatness of the

New Way of Worship that brings us life is so much brighter.

**11** The shining light that came with the Law of Moses soon passed away. But the new way of life is much brighter. It will never pass away.

**12** We speak without fear because our trust is in Christ.

**13** We are not like Moses. He put a covering over his face so the Jews would not see that the bright light was passing away.

**14** Their minds were not able to understand. Even to this day when the Law is read, there is a covering over their minds.

They do not see that Christ is the only One Who can take the covering away.

**15** Yes, to this day, there is a covering over their hearts whenever the Law of Moses is read.

**16** But whenever a man turns to the Lord, the covering is taken away.

**17** The heart is free where the Spirit of the Lord is. The Lord is the Spirit.

**18** All of us, with no covering on our faces, show the shining-greatness of the Lord as in a mirror. All the time we are being changed to look like Him, with more and more of His shining-greatness. This change is from the Lord Who is the Spirit.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians 4:1-15

### Memory Verse

“Through God’s loving-kindness, He has given us this job to do. So we do not give up.”

(2 Corinthians 4:1)

### Word List

**excited:** having strong feelings; here good feelings of happiness

**confuse:** to mix up, especially in the mind

**courage:** being able to have less fear in danger, pain, or trouble; being brave

**eternity:** the endless time after death

# God Can Use Weak People

God has the power to help us weak people. God brought good to Paul with great power. Paul did not worry when he faced trouble. God was working through him.

We have a great task as we serve our Lord. This requires us to be ready with our faith and trust in Him. God will guide us in the ways we serve Him. He knows best how to work through our lives.

### **We do not lose heart in tough times (2 Corinthians 4:1–6)**

Many times in life we get **excited**. We may have a new job or new family member. We may move to another city. Soon the excitement wears off. We do not have the joy that we knew earlier. So, many times we lose heart. Sometimes we lose hope because our dreams do not come true.

Paul clearly states in verses 1-2 that the believers cannot give up. Their gift of loving-kindness is too great to misuse. Paul continues to say they will carry out their ministry in a true way. Paul also notes that Satan, “the god of this world”, (v.4) will try to **confuse** people. Satan will work to keep people from wanting to know about God. Verse 4 shows that Satan tries to blind people from the truth.

At the same time, God wants people to see the truth. But He does not make people come to Him in faith. God gives all of us the choice to decide for ourselves. No one decides for us. We each make our own decisions. We can seek God and find

### Things To Think About

1. What is the best way to stay ready to serve?
2. Do we sometimes lose our feeling that we want to serve? If so, why does this happen?
3. What can we do to stop that problem from happening to us?

Him through Christ. Or, people can be self-centered and never look to be saved from the punishment of their sin. That's the kind of person Satan wants to have power over. Satan works hard to keep those people under his power.

#### **We have the great treasure (4:7–12)**

One of the great passages of the Bible is found right here. Paul tells the believers at Corinth about their strength while being weak. This idea sounds strange and goes against common sense. But we know a spiritual truth. Using God's power, all is possible.

Read verse 7 in a different Bible version. Paul compares us to jars of clay. These kinds of jars were used for many needs. A clay jar would break after much use. The owner would crush the clay jar. Then he would add water and mold the clay again. So, clay jars could be used again and again. Paul says we are like clay jars that hold a great treasure. The treasure is the very Spirit of God working in our lives.

Paul writes a beautiful picture in verses 8–12. He reminds the Christians about the troubles they face. Such problems could even lead to the deaths of the believers. This does not make Paul fear. He knows that God is working in his life and in the lives of believers. Paul knows that non-believers will be surprised by the **courage** of the believers.

The believers will become life examples of Christ living in us. People pay little attention to the superhero who has all the muscles and brains. They expect that person to do well. But people will pay much attention to the weaker person who

stands above the great problems of life. This shocking idea makes them ask, “What has happened in this person?” And the answer is Jesus. Paul later said it this way: “...Christ in you brings hope of all the great things to come” (Colossians 1:27b).

**We will follow Jesus in living forever  
(4:13–15)**

One of the great truths in the Bible is about **eternity**. We cannot fully understand eternity, but we know the One who does. We can prepare ourselves right now in order to be ready for all eternity. Paul says strongly that our hope is found in Jesus (v.14). Just as He was raised from the dead, so we will be raised. We give Him the praise for raising us. Also, the verse reminds us that some day we will be with Him. It is one thing to think about living forever, but it is quite different knowing who you will be living with. We have the joy of knowing that Jesus Christ will be with us. There can be no better place to be.

Paul says that more people are trusting Christ (v.15). This is true in our world today. Large numbers of the

population of Africa are coming to faith in Jesus. They are leaving their idols and voodoo practices. Many people are coming to Christ in Asia. They are leaving religious practices of thousands of years. And many Latin Americans are finding a personal relationship with Christ. They had the look of religion for years, but now daily walk with Jesus.

There is a great hymn entitled “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations.” The word for “nations” in the Bible means groups of people. So, God is reaching out to the villages and tribes and cultures. He is reaching into the great cities and into the big countryside of our world. We can be part of the wonderful story of God’s loving-favor. What is your part in this, for the shining-greatness of God?

**2 Corinthians 4:1-15**

**1** Through God's loving-kindness, He has given us this job to do. So we do not give up.

**2** We have put away all things that are done in secret and in shame. We do not play with the Word of God or use it in a false way. Because we are telling the truth, we want men's hearts to listen to us. God knows our desires.

**3** If the Good News we preach is hidden, it is hidden to those who are lost in sin.

**4** The eyes of those who do not believe are made blind by Satan who is the god of this world. He does not want the light of the Good News to shine in their hearts. This Good News shines as the shining-greatness of Christ. Christ is as God is.

**5** We do not preach about ourselves. We preach Christ Jesus the Lord. We are your servants because of Jesus.

**6** It was God Who said, "The light will shine in darkness." (Genesis 1:3) He is the One Who made His light shine in our hearts. This brings us the light of knowing God's shining-greatness which is seen in Christ's face.

**7** We have this light from God in our human bodies. This shows that the power is from God. It is not from ourselves.

**8** We are pressed on every side, but we still have room to move. We are often in much trouble, but we never give up.

**9** People make it hard for us, but we are not left alone. We are knocked down, but we are not destroyed.

**10** We carry marks on our bodies that show the death of Jesus. This is how Jesus makes His life seen in our bodies.

**11** Every day of our life we face death because of Jesus. In this way, His life is seen in our bodies

**12** Death is working in us because we work for the Lord, but His life is working in you.

**13** The Holy Writings say, "I believed so I spoke." (Psalm 116:10) We have the same kind of faith as David had. We also believe, so we speak.

**14** We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. He will raise us up also. God will take us to Himself and He will take you.

**15** These things happened for your good. As more people receive God's favor, they will give thanks for the shining-greatness of God.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians  
4:16 – 5:10

### Memory Verse

“Our life is lived by  
faith. We do not live  
by what we see in  
front of us.”

2 Corinthians 5:7

### Word List

**boldly:** easily ready  
for possible danger

**logic:** way of  
thinking in order, not  
in a confused way

**reward(ed):** given  
something in return  
for good deeds

# Our Faith Gives Us Hope Forever

All believers, young and old, can work for Jesus now while waiting for heaven in the future. We can help others know about their future when it is in the hands of God.

With God’s power, Christians can take care of any of the problems of life. This list of problems includes even the greatest battle over death. God gives us the ability to meet anything **boldly**. We can thank God for His power in us.

## **Hope in spite of hurts (4:16 – 5:5)**

Paul was very honest with the Corinthian believers. He did not say that he did not have any difficulties in this life. While he told about the hurts, Paul also showed hope. He reminded the Christians that they could see with spiritual eyes. That means they could understand more than others without Christ.

When Jesus told about His own death in the future, He also talked about His resurrection. This is the greatest way

### Things To Think About

1. How does each of us think about and help ourselves and others with the problem of death?
2. The hope given through Christ is a gift for everyone.

of saying that good comes out of the bad in life. Christians have hope because Jesus gives us something better than what we have in this world.

Paul also compares our body to a tent. We now have a body that is fit for this world. That body is a temporary dwelling place. Our bodies will not serve well in the next world. Paul faithfully believes that after death, Christians will receive a special body just right for heaven. Even though Paul looks forward to heaven, he takes joy in his life. The Holy Spirit gave Paul a reason to live until God took him to heaven.

We can likewise be patient and hopeful. We can know that God will prepare us a greater, lasting heavenly body. Also, right now we can serve Him well with the bodies He has already given us.

### **Looking to heaven (5:6–10)**

We see Paul's simple **logic** on service in verse 6. If we are alive on this world, we aren't in heaven yet. But that very fact makes us sure that it will be good to be home

in heaven. We are helped by the idea that we live by faith. Of course we live with water, food, and shelter. But more important than all that, the Christian lives by faith. All the other gifts from God will support the most important gift, which is faith.

Paul explains a fact that many Christians do not understand today. He says that he would want to be in heaven more than to stay on earth. Many Christians today don't think about heaven very much. They are perfectly happy here on earth.

Paul writes the Corinthian church about standing before Christ in heaven. This tells about a special payment for the Christian who goes to heaven. Such a payment is not about our sins. While on the cross, Jesus Christ took care of our sin payment. The idea for this payment is about a person's Christian efforts. We

in a place now where we are being tested for what will happen in eternity.

We have many chances in this world for honoring and serving Christ. Those actions for Jesus will be **rewarded** when each Christian stands before Christ Jesus. We can know that God sees all and remembers all. Of course, a Christian should closely follow what the Holy Spirit tells us. This should be done out of love for Jesus. While the good things done on earth will be rewarded in heaven, they are done to praise Jesus, not to get a reward.

**2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:10**

**16** This is the reason we do not give up. Our human body is wearing out. But our spirits are getting stronger every day.

**17** The little troubles we suffer now for a short time are making us ready for the great things God is going to give us forever.

**18** We do not look at the things that can be seen. We look at the things that cannot be seen. The things that can be seen will come to an end. But the things that cannot be seen will last forever.

**5:1** Our body is like a house we live in here on earth. When it is destroyed, we know that God has another body for us in heaven. The new one will not be made by human hands as a house is made. This body will last forever.

**2** Right now we cry inside ourselves because we wish we could have our new body which we will have in heaven.

**3** We will not be without a body. We will live in a new body.

**4** While we are in this body, we cry inside ourselves because things are hard for us. It

is not that we want to die. Instead, we want to live in our new bodies. We want this dying body to be changed into a living body that lasts forever.

**5** It is God Who has made us ready for this change. He has given us His Spirit to show us what He has for us.

**6** We are sure of this. We know that while we are at home in this body we are not with the Lord.

**7** Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us.

**8** We are sure we will be glad to be free of these bodies. It will be good to be at home with the Lord.

**9** So if we stay here on earth or go home to Him, we always want to please Him.

**10** For all of us must stand before Christ when He says who is guilty or not guilty. Each one will receive pay for what he has done while he lived in this body.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians  
5:11-21

### **Memory Verse**

“For if a man belongs to Christ, he is a new person. The old life is gone. New life has begun.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

### **Word List**

**motivated:** to have a feeling that makes one want to do something

**harmful:** hurts or gives a lot of pain

**guides:** shows the right way; leads those who follow

# Motivated to Ministry

Paul wanted the believers in Corinth to see the work of Jesus. He did not want them to feel pride about his own actions. Paul told these people again that they were new. Jesus changed their lives and they will never be the same again.

When we study what Jesus did for us, we will want to help others. Every time we remember God’s love for His Son, we should want to love others in that way.

## **God’s love moves us (5:11–15)**

Paul speaks of the fear of God in verse 11. It is easy to think we understand the idea of fear. But the fear of the Lord is something special. For the Christian, this spiritual fear differs from being afraid of **harmful** things. In the Old Testament, we see Job going through all kinds of problems or tests. He said in Job 28:28b “...the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.” There are other verse that talk about the same idea. Deuteronomy 10:12b states we should “...fear the Lord your God....” And Proverbs 16:6b tells us “...The fear of the Lord keeps one away from sin.”

This kind of fear keeps us from doing wrong things. It is a matter of not wanting to break the heart of a loved one. We love God and do not wish to break his heart with our sinfulness. So, we respect Him in our work and worship. We fear the result of what would happen if we willingly sin. We keep our lives clean and ask forgiveness when we know we’ve sinned. This kind of fear is good for keeping us close to God’s will. This fear makes us want to listen to God’s Spirit as He **guides** us.

### Things To Think About

1. How will we change to be more like Jesus?
2. What will it take to make us more loving and stronger against being tempted to sin?

Verses 12 through 15 have a lot of meaning. Here, Paul talks about the importance of having a good name. We share our faith well when people see our good work for Jesus. And our words will be heard and believed if our lives are examples of Jesus' love.

In verse 13, Paul says strongly that his ways and thoughts are pure. Lost people can fail to understand our Christian actions. They may even think we are crazy as we serve Christ. In Acts 26:24, you will see that some people thought Paul was crazy. Someone with great joy will always look strange to those who have no joy. In Paul's case, he didn't care that they called him crazy. Paul knew that lost people can not fully understand forgiveness and kindness. So, he was glad to hear that people questioned his reasons for what he did. That meant that they were watching him. And if they listened to Paul, many would come to faith in Jesus.

Verse 15 tells us that Jesus died for all. He did not suffer and die for only certain people. He did not go to the cross just for the smart or rich. Jesus died for everyone. He went to the cross for the poor people, too. He died for people with little training. He gives all of us hope, if our past is good or not good.

#### **With Christ, we are new and different (5:16-21)**

One of the greatest verses of the Bible is 2 Corinthians 5:17. God tells us strongly that new life comes for all believers. The past will never return and life is totally new. Since our lives are now different, we think differently. We are to have the

mind of Christ. We will love with His kind of servant love. We will give ourselves like Jesus did. We will have patience and forgiveness like the Savior.

With the power of God, the Christian has new ways of thinking and acting that are God's ways. We share the joy of using the phrase "in Christ." That means He lives in Christians, giving us His wisdom and strength. We need His strength because we have a new job. In the last part of verse 19, we see that job. We are to tell and show others something. That something is that the Good News is for everyone.

We tell others to bring them to Jesus. That means we are to help others come to faith. They must come to Jesus the way He says. None of us decides to come to Jesus in our own way. We do not tell our Lord what to do. He tells us to be sorry and turn from our sins and follow Him. That is what we must do. After we become Christians, we can tell others the same truth. We help others to be sorry, turn from their sins and follow our Lord. There can be no greater job in this world than to serve Jesus.

The Bible uses a word to describe our job in sharing Jesus. We are to become

missionaries for Him. Missionaries are like ambassadors for Jesus. Each country has a set of ambassadors. These people represent their governments in other countries. The honor of the country is in the ambassador's hands. People will decide their ideas about a country by what the ambassador says. So, the job of the ambassador is very important.

Being an ambassador for Christ is a very powerful thing. It is a very big and important job. We are given the job of leading people to eternal life. Nothing can be more exciting than that.

In verse 21, we see an amazing idea. Paul tells us again that God put our sin on Jesus. Since Christ died for our sin, we can be clean. We can also be made right with God. Someone has to pay for sin and Jesus took that pain for us.

We can thank our God for His goodness to us. We will always be owe our Lord. First, we are thankful for what He did for us on the cross. There is another reason we owe our thanks to Him. That reason is what He does for us now. God watches over us and gives us His Spirit.

Our God made us, saved us, and now helps us. On top of all that list of

love, there is one more thing we need to remember. He is our best friend.

## **2 Corinthians 5:11–21**

**11** Because of this, we know that fear of God. So we try to get men to put their trust in Christ. God knows us. I hope that your hearts know me well also.

**12** We do not want to sound as if we think we are so important. Instead, we are making it easy for you to be proud of us. In that way, you will be able to tell them about us. They always talk about the way people look, but do not care about their hearts.

**13** Are we crazy to talk like this? It is all because of what God has done. If we are using our minds well, it is for you.

**14** For the love of Christ puts us into action. We are sure that Christ died for everyone. So, because of that, everyone has a part in His death.

**15** Christ died for everyone so that they would live for Him. They should not live to please themselves but for Christ Who died on a cross and was raised from the dead for them.

**16** So from now on, we do not think about what people are like by looking at them. We even thought about Christ that way one time. But we do not think of Him that way anymore.

**17** For if a man belongs to Christ, he is a new person. The old life is gone. New life has begun.

**18** All this comes from God. He is the One Who brought us to Himself when we hated Him. He did this through Christ. Then He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.

**19** God was in Christ. He was working through Christ to bring the whole world back to Himself. God no longer held men's sins against them. And He gave us the work of telling and showing men this.

**20** We are Christ's missionaries. God is speaking to you through us. We are speaking for Christ and we ask you from our hearts to turn from your sins and come to God.

**21** Christ never sinned but God put our sin on Him. Then we are made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.



Lesson  
7  
Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians  
6:1-13; 7:2-4

### Memory Verse

“We are full of sorrow and yet we are always happy. We are poor and yet we make many people rich. We have nothing and yet we have everything.”  
(2 Corinthians 6:10)

### Word List

**challenged:** strongly asked for action  
**disappointments:** things that are not what is hoped for  
**extreme:** very great, more than the most  
**content:** happy with what one has; not wanting anything else

# Open Up Your Heart

Paul worked hard to help the Corinthian church know the truth about his faith. He was very serious in his work and words. Paul wanted them to grow in Christ, just as he showed in his life.

## Having everything while owning nothing

### (2 Corinthians 6:1-10)

Paul explained many things to the Corinthian believers. He told them that they needed to work together. (v. 1) Paul was just a part of the whole group. The church members were also important workers, just as they are today. Paul quotes a verse from Isaiah 49. He helps them understand the importance of time. Paul **challenged** them to see that now is the time to do God’s saving work. The same is true for us today. We must not lose our chances to do His work while we have the time.

Paul tells the believers that their lives should never keep people from God’s Word (v.3). People should see good examples in the lives of Christians. Sometimes those good examples come in very powerful ways. We see an amazing picture of this in verses 4-5. The believers are found to be strong although they had many troubles. They are good at showing Jesus to others even when times are tough.

Paul gives a list of pressures on the Christians (v.4-5). The first kind of pressure is from inner problems. These problems might be from **disappointments**, worries, and sorrows. At times it seems that life is hard and we don’t know what to do. There is a wonderful answer in Jesus.

**Things To  
Think About**

1. How do others see Jesus in me?
2. Is it clear to them that I love Christ?

Another group of pressures in the same list are from outer problems in life. Here we are talking about the **extreme** problems for the early Christians. They knew they could go to prison for their faith. They had to be ready to be whipped or beaten for believing in Jesus Christ. The Christians had to be ready for groups of angry people who wanted to hurt them. Christians suffered greatly during these horrible times.

The final group of pressures given in verses 4-5 is the need to try to do Christ-like actions. Paul spoke of the troubles in his service for the Lord. He tried to explain that a believer could serve until they had no more energy. Paul knew this kind of worker for Christ would be serious about serving the Master. Paul also listed the problem of sleepless nights. Certainly there were times when Paul was so troubled that he could not go to sleep. We also see in this list the idea of going without food. Paul remembered the times when he had no food as he was serving our Savior.

Paul begins to write about many of the good gifts from God a Christian can have (v.6). A Christian can grow spiritually as these gifts are used well. Here, we see the idea of purity. This means being able to stay pure and do God's will. The idea of knowing what to do comes next. Many times we do not know what we should do or say. God makes us able to do and say the right thing.

The idea of suffering long is called patience. This does not mean your actions in a slow line at the store. Paul means being calm around people even when they are very unkind to believers. This is a powerful gift for Christians to own.

Paul also talks about true love that will not stop. This kind of love is stronger than anything in the world. If people hurt the Christian, they get love back. They are not given the same unkind or hurtful things. The Christian works hard to forgive and keep loving in this world of sin.

Paul gives us an amazing list (vv. 7-10). He shows us that it does not make a difference how we are, God is good. We may have extreme problems, but the final winner is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can continue in life with any trouble or problem when we honor Him.

Paul finishes with the idea that we have nothing, but own everything. How can this be? A Christian does not need to own anything in this world. This is because the Christian is rich in this world and the next. The love of Christ and His forgiveness are far more important than money. Also, God's promise of our home in heaven allows us to be **content** while here on earth.

### **Make sure your heart is open (6:11-13)**

Paul had to write to the Corinthian believers about sharing. Many times Christians can start being selfish again. The

difference between giving and keeping is easy to see. Paul could see how the people were not opening their hearts. He challenged them to follow his example.

We need more church leaders to be like Paul. More leaders need to be great givers. They also need to challenge their members to share with an open heart. Paul asked the Corinthian believers to open up their hearts for many reasons. He was not thinking of himself. Paul wanted them to be more like Jesus in their giving.

### **Having joy while in trouble (7:2-4)**

Paul strongly asked the Corinthian believers to love him and his Christian friends. The Apostle Paul showed them his great care by saying two important things. He said that he trusted and took pride in them. These were words of support and love. We can also use these words to give strength to our friends. Great things happen when we tell people about our trust and pride in them. When our friends hear this, they want to do better. Paul finishes this part of his letter telling them of his joy. Paul's joy comes even during the tough times. We need to understand the word

“joy.” This means a wonderful, strong spirit inside of us. We find strength and peace during our troubles. Paul had this kind of joy and we can find it, too. Our Lord will bless us with the same joy as we serve Him well.

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### 2 Corinthians 6:1-13 & 7:2-4

**1** We are working together with God. We ask you from our hearts not to receive God’s loving-favor and then waste it.

**2** The Holy Writings say, “I heard you at the right time. I helped you on that day to be saved from the punishment of sin. Now is the right time! See! Now is the day to be saved.” (Isaiah 49:8)

**3** We do not want to put anything in the way that would keep people from God. We do not want to be blamed.

**4** Everything we do shows we are God’s servants. We have had to wait and suffer. We have needed things. We have been in many hard places and have had many troubles.

**5** We have been beaten. We have been put in prison. We have been in fights. We have worked hard. We have stayed awake watching. We have gone without food.

**6** We have been pure. We have known what to do. We have suffered long. We have been kind. The Holy Spirit has worked in us. We have had true love.

**7** We have spoken the truth. We have God’s power. We have the sword of being right with

God in the right hand and in the left hand.

**8** Some men respect us and some do not. Some men speak bad against us and some thank us. They say we lie, but we speak the truth.

**9** Some men act as if they do not know us. And yet we are known by everyone. They act as if we were dead, but we are alive. They try to hurt and destroy us, but they are not able to kill us.

**10** We are full of sorrow and yet we are always happy. We are poor and yet we make many people rich. We have nothing and yet we have everything.

**11** We have spoken to you who are in the city of Corinth with plain words. Our hearts are wide open.

**12** Our hearts are not closed to you. But you have closed your hearts to us.

**13** I am speaking to you now as if you were my own children. Open your hearts wide to us! That will pay us back for what we have done for you.

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**7:2** Receive us into your hearts. We have done no wrong to anyone. We have not led anyone in the wrong way. We have not used anyone for our good.

**3** I do not say this to tell you that you are wrong. As I have said before, you have a place in our hearts and always will. If we live or die, we will be together.

**4** I trust you and am proud of you. You give me much comfort and joy even when I suffer.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians 7:5–16

### **Memory Verse**

“But God gives comfort to those whose hearts are heavy.”

(2 Corinthians 7:6a)

### **Word List**

**correct:** (verb) to make sad to help turn from sin, ask to change something bad

**self-centered:** thinking mostly about oneself

**loyal:** loving someone in good and bad times

# Sorrow that Leads to Joy

You can **correct** another person in a mean way or you can help them to act more like Jesus in a loving way. Paul showed the right way to change people through love. We must speak the truth in a loving way. We can help each other to be more like Jesus.

## **God comforts those who have sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:5-9)**

Many times the great joys of life come from having a friend. Paul said in verse 6 that when Titus came it gave comfort to him. The Apostle Paul had been through great problems. He needed strength from someone else because his was gone. Titus came at the right time. Many of us need to be ready to go at just the right time to help another believer. If a great man of God such as Paul needed help from others, we have the same need, too. Be ready to bring joy to another worker for the Lord.

Paul was happy to hear that the Corinthian believers had helped Titus. The Apostle found out more about the believers' love for Paul. This news strengthened Paul a great deal. We all grow stronger when we hear that others support us.

After Paul thanked the believers for their efforts, he had to deal with a hard subject. Paul talked about the times he had to correct them. He said this was very hard to do because he loved the Corinthian believers. Many times we wish to stay away from difficult subjects. We fight over what we should say.

Paul must have thought about that problem and told the Corinthian believers the truth. Whatever Paul had said earlier, he was happy about what happened next. He had to correct them

### Things To Think About

1. How can a Christian help another when that person is wrong?
2. What can we say that both helps and does not hurt the other person?
3. Is it difficult for us to hear that we have done the wrong thing?

with strong words that led to sorrow. Because of that sorrow they turned away from sin. The Corinthian Christians changed their ways and began again to grow in their faith.

It is much better talk about a problem rather than to ignore it. Many problems between friends will become greater difficulties if they are not corrected. We need to speak the truth in love, as Jesus would do. Sometimes that means we have to have a lot of courage. We can pray and ask God to give us the right words to say. We must ask God to help us act like Jesus Christ.

We must also remember to try to understand the other person. We can often solve half of the problem if we look at it the way the other person sees it. We not be **self-centered** in wanting just “our way.” We must first want Christ’s way more than anything else. We must want to help our friends up rather than knock them down.

### **God gives us strength (7:10-16)**

We can learn a lot from verses 10-16. Paul talks about a special kind of sorrow, which he calls “the sorrow that God uses” or Godly sorrow. This kind of sorrow is seen when people truly change their ways of living. A person shows his sorrow by a change in words and actions. Our greatest example of Christ is in what we do rather than what we say.

The sorrow of this world, though, brings death (v.10). Worldly sorrow is bad and selfish. It is not the same as Godly sorrow. Worldly sorrow is really not life-changing. This sorrow is found in the person who is caught doing the wrong

thing. That person is angry about being caught. That person doesn't want to begin serving the Lord. They are simply upset that they got caught.

Godly sorrow knows that others have been hurt. Godly sorrow wants to right those wrongs and make a difference in others' lives. We can know this kind of sorrow when we are growing Christians who want to follow our Lord.

The Bible gives us good examples of a person who had Godly sorrow and another person who had worldly sorrow. Both of these people were part of the last days of Jesus' life. Both of these men acted like cowards. Each of them did things that brought shame on them. Neither Simon Peter nor Judas were **loyal** to Jesus in those last hours.

The person who had Godly sorrow was Simon Peter. The one with worldly sorrow was Judas. Simon Peter sinned when he denied our Lord. This caused him deep sorrow. Peter turned away from his sin, asked for forgiveness and followed Jesus again. Our Lord forgave Peter and made him a great leader in the early church.

Judas, though, had worldly sorrow.

He betrayed our Lord and gave Jesus over to the Romans. Later, Judas had a kind of sorrow that led to taking his own life. Judas did not ask for forgiveness. He walked away from the love of Jesus Christ.

In verse 11, Paul sees many of the wonderful actions that come from Godly sorrow. When believers have Godly sorrow, they begin to want the right things to be done. This brought great comfort to Paul. We also find this kind of joy when a believer begins to grow in Christ. The believer begins to work for the right and good. This person says things that help others heal both in the church and where he lives.

We need many people in today's world who will stand up for what is right. Many times we can take the easy way of not talking and not changing what is wrong. We need the courage to be like Jesus, correcting what is wrong. If we don't do the right thing, we will feel Godly sorrow. When we feel Godly sorrow, we must again ask forgiveness and stand up for our Lord.

Thankfully, our God loves us even when we do the wrong thing. He uses us for His praise, even though we still do wrong

against Him at times. We are like Titus, Paul, and the Corinthian church. We sin and then we turn from our sin and are free again. We ask for His strength and He gives us great power. We will always find joy in service as we walk with the Savior.

### **2 Corinthians 7:5–16**

**5** When we arrived in the country of Macedonia, we had no rest. We had all kinds of trouble. There was fighting all around us. Our hearts were afraid.

**6** But God gives comfort to those whose hearts are heavy. He gave us comfort when Titus came.

**7** Not only did his coming comfort us, but the comfort you had given him made me happy also. He told us how much you wanted to see us. He said that you were sad because of my trouble and that you wanted to help me. This made me happy.

**8** I am not sorry now if my letter made you sad. I know it made you sad, but it was only for awhile.

**9** I am happy now. It is not because you were hurt by my letter, but because it turned you from sin to God. God used it and you were not hurt by what we did.

**10** The sorrow that God uses makes people sorry for their sin and leads them to turn from sin so they can be saved from the punishment of sin. We should be happy for that kind of sorrow, but the sorrow of this world brings death.

**11** See how this sorrow God allowed you to have has worked in you. You had a desire to be free of that sin I wrote about. You were angry about it. You were afraid. You wanted to do something about it. In every way you did what you could to make it right.

**12** I sent this. It was not written only because of the man who did the wrong or because of the one who suffered.

**13** All this has given us comfort. More than this, we are happy for the joy Titus has. His spirit has been made stronger by all of you.

**14** I told him how proud I was of you. You did not make me ashamed. What we said to Titus proved to be true.

**15** He loves you all the more. He remembers how all of you were ready to obey and how you respected him.

**16** I am happy that I can have complete trust in you.

# 2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally

## Unit 2

Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English

Learning To Give  
(2 Corinthians 8-9)

### Lesson 9

Be a Good Giver  
(2 Corinthians 8:1-21)

### Lesson 10

We Can Give Since  
God Gives  
(2 Corinthians 9:6-15)

## LEARNING TO GIVE

**G**iving is not always easy. Some people have a problem with giving to others. Usually, our giving reflects how thankful we are. The more thankful we are, the easier it is to give.

Many people show their love for others by giving them gifts. We can show our love for our Lord by giving our time and money. In giving our time, we can help our church in many ways. We can teach children, visit the sick, and clean up our church building. Anyone can be a great giver.

Remember that giving is something that takes time to learn. We can grow in our ability to give. Many in our world have so much less than we have. We need to think about them and remember the example of our own Lord. He gave everything He had to us. God will give us good gifts as we share what we have.

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*Don Sewell is Director of the Texas Partnerships Resource Center for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Originally from Borger, Don graduated from Baylor University. He also holds both the Masters and Ph.D. degrees. Don is married to the former Rebecca Graves and they have two grown sons, Brent and Keith. Formerly, he worked as an administrator for the Foreign Mission Board as well as a professor at Golden Gate Baptist Seminary. Don also taught at the Mexican Baptist Seminary in Mexico City.*



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians 8:1-21

### **Memory Verse**

“If a man is ready and willing to give, he should give of what he has, not of what he does not have.”

(2 Corinthians 8:12)

### **Word List**

**pity:** sadness for another person’s suffering or trouble

**opinion:** what one person thinks or believes

**faithful:** loyal to someone or something as in loyal to the faith

# Be a Good Giver

Jesus wants us to be more like Him every day. We can grow as Christians through the ways we give. Giving includes money, time, and spirit. Giving people are loving people.

### **Begin to be a great giver (2 Corinthians 8:1–7)**

Chapter 8 helps us see the importance of giving. The believers of the early churches had their own problems with money. They had times with very little food and very few things. They lived in a world where many suffered. To be a Christian meant that one would be concerned about the hurts of others. Paul talks to the Corinthian believers about the spirit and actions of giving.

The church at Jerusalem was suffering at the time of this writing. They did not have enough to live on. Some of the members of the Jerusalem church had lost their jobs. Some took a strong stand for their faith and then lost their work. For example, think about a Christian carpenter who was told to work on a temple for the false Roman gods. He would stand up for his faith and walk away from the job.

Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to show their love to the church at Jerusalem. This was the mother church. Other churches started from this earliest group of believers. Paul knew this special gift was important, so he asked the Corinthian believers to give. Paul told the Corinthian believers that they could excel in giving. He challenged them to do as well in giving as they had done in faith and good logic.

**Things To**  
**Think About**

1. How do we give?
2. Is our giving like the teachings of Jesus?
3. Do we love to give?

**Willing givers have great power (8:8–15)**

Paul was a great leader. He gave the Corinthian Christians some examples of other believers who gave with an open heart. He shared the giving example of Christ Himself. Paul warned them about only feeling a little **pity** without wanting to help. Many of us have a small amount of pain when we see another person hurting. Our giving must be with open hearts. We cannot give well if we have just a little pity. We need to care about the need until the problem has been solved.

Paul also mentions that life has a way of becoming equal. Just as one gives, that person will receive. When a believer shares with an open heart, this person will be paid back. They may be paid back sometime far into the future, but one can be sure of it.

There are two great examples of giving people found in Acts 28:2 and Philippians 2:26-30. The verses from the book of Acts talk about a man named Aristarchus. He came along to help Paul when he was arrested. This was a very serious decision to make. Aristarchus became like a slave to Paul. He comforted Paul during the time he was to be taken before the emperor of Rome. Aristarchus was willing to give his life. No greater gift could be offered.

The example from Philippians concerned a man named Epaphroditus. He came to stay with Paul while he was in prison. Epaphroditus brought Paul a gift from the Philippian church. While in prison, this man actually came so close to dying that Paul thought he was going to die. Paul was very thankful to the church and to this man of courage.

Paul wrote from the Old Testament verses found in Exodus 16:18 (v.15). Many of the same truths of God from the Old Testament were needed in the days of Paul. And now in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we need all of the great truths from both the Old and the New Testaments.

### **Giving your time to the church (8:16–21)**

The Apostle Paul saw that Titus had the same desire for giving. Titus was happy to see the support for the Jerusalem church. With Titus' support, a greater idea was given to the Corinthian church to give. For large church projects, we need to agree with our Christian brothers. Paul and Titus agreed with each other and God helped them in their work.

Paul was a very smart leader. He knew that others would ask about his leadership. The Corinthian believers had done that. Paul worked on a plan to deliver the money to the Jerusalem church and stop any questions. He would make sure that two other men traveled with him. Then no one could say that Paul was not taking good care of the money. No one could say Paul

was trying to take the money for himself.

Paul says that taking care of the gift is a way of honoring the Lord (v.19). Paul reminds us that we honor our Lord through the things we do on this earth. We please Him by our actions. Every time we do anything, we have the chance to honor our Lord. If we really love Him, we will find ways to honor Him by acting like Christ in this world.

Paul told them that he worked hard to do the right thing in the eyes of both the Lord and people. We must always care about our Lord's **opinion** of our lives. We must also care about what others think about us. People are always watching us. They are deciding if they will believe the Good News of Christ. We become their test of Christians. We do not want anyone to turn away because of our bad example.

Of course, there is no question about whom to follow first. We follow Christ without worrying what others will say. We should never put another person's opinion before Christ's loving-favor. We always follow the Master and let others make their own decisions. We cannot care about the opinions of others when God tells us to

follow Him. While we work to be **faithful** to Christ, we must show love to others. We serve Him and care for others. The book of 1 John tells us that if we really love God, we will have love for others. May we always live so others see our love for our Lord and for people.

### 2 Corinthians 8:1–21

**1** Christian brothers, we want you to know how the loving-favor of God has been shown in the churches in the country of Macedonia.

**2** They have been put to the test by much trouble, but they have much joy. They have given much even though they were very poor.

**3** They gave as much as they could because they wanted to.

**4** They asked from their hearts if they could help the Christians in Jerusalem.

**5** It was more than we expected. They gave themselves to the Lord first. Then they gave themselves to us to be used as the Lord wanted.

**6** We asked Titus to keep on helping you finish this act of love. He was the one to begin this.

**7** You are rich in everything. You have faith. You can preach. You have much learning. You have a strong desire to help. And you have love for us. Now do what you should about giving also.

**8** I am not saying that you must do this, but I have told you how others have helped. This is a way to prove how true your love is.

**9** You know of the loving-favor shown by our Lord Jesus Christ. He was rich, but He became

poor for your good. In that way, because He became poor, you might become rich.

**10** This is what I think. You had better finish what you started a year ago. You were the first to want to give a gift of money.

**11** No do it with the same strong desires you had when you started when you started.

**12** If a man is ready and willing to give, he should give of what he has, not of what he does not have.

**13** This does not mean that others do not have to give and you have to give much. You should share alike.

**14** You have more than you need now. When you have need, then they can help you. You should share alike.

**15** The Holy Writings say, “The man who gathered much did not have too much. The man who did not gather much had enough.” (Exodus 16:18)

**16** I thank God that He gave Titus the same desire to help you.

**17** He was glad when we asked him to help you. He decided himself to go to you.

**18** We are sending the Christian brother along. He is respected in the churches for his preaching.

**19** Not only that, but he has been asked by the churches to travel with me to Jerusalem. He will help in giving them the gift. The Lord will be honored by it because it shows how we want to help each other.

**20** We want everyone to trust us with the way we take this large gift of money to them.

**21** We want to do the right thing. We want God and men to know we are honest.

# 2 Corinthians: Taking Ministry Personally

## Unit 3

Adult Bible Study  
in Simplified English

Doing Better Than  
the Usual  
(2 Corinthians 10-12)

### Lesson 11

Boast in God,  
Not in Yourself  
(2 Corinthians 10:1-18)

### Lesson 12

Jesus' Help is All  
We Need  
(2 Corinthians  
11:16 - 12:10)

### Lesson 13

God's Love Helps  
People Change  
(2 Corinthians  
12:14 - 13:11)

## DOING BETTER THAN THE USUAL

**M**any times we do only what everyone else wants us to do. We must follow Jesus rather than the ideas of others. Our Lord will help us, but sometimes we have to stand up for ourselves. So, we are very grateful for God's strength when the pressure is on us.

At times even churches have serious problems. The best idea is for a church to work in together without fighting. This is sometimes difficult because Christians are at different stages of growth. Some are more self-centered than others. All of us need to learn more about the messages in our Bibles.

We need God to do better than the usual. He will give us courage and understanding if we ask Him. God wants us be shining examples for Jesus. We can follow Him and we must follow Him.

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*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

### Memory Verse

“God can give you all you need. He will give you more than enough. You will have everything you need for yourselves. And you will have enough left over to give when there is a need.”

(2 Corinthians 9:8)

### Word List

**blesses:** gives happiness or good things

**results:** things caused by something else; what happens because of something

**centuries:** groups of

# We Can Give Since God Gives

When a Christian grows, he or she will begin to see the work of God more clearly. That includes how one’s giving helps in many ways. The growing Christian will want to find even more ways to honor God by giving. God **blesses** us when we give.

### **Being happy in giving (9:6–9)**

Paul starts this part of the letter in verse 6 by asking the Corinthian believers to have good memories. They are to remember that God has a plan for giving. When a person gives little, that person receives little. When one gives with an open heart, he will receive a great amount in return. The Apostle wants them to see the faithfulness of God.

The idea for us to remember today is that God knows what is happening in His world. He watches and knows everything that happens. God knows very well when we give with joy. He blesses us when we want to give much. Verse 7 says that each of us decides how much to give. We do not follow anyone else in giving. We have no one making us give. We are to decide ourselves and be happy with our choice in giving.

When we give with open hearts, we become rich in many very important ways. We grow in our love and others will see that change. Soon, others will respond in love to us. As we help others, we will get help from them in return. Also, when we give with joy, we begin to understand God’s ways. He gave His Son

100 years; 3 centuries  
is 300 years.

**Things To  
Think About**

1. Do you really believe that giving is important?
2. Do you think most Christians would say that giving is important?
3. Do you agree with the Bible when it says that we are more happy when we give than when we receiving?  
(Acts 20:35)

for us, and He calls on us to be like Jesus in every way.

There is an old phrase that says, “Takers eat well, but givers sleep well.” The idea here is that people who take much can be owners of many things, but that does not bring happiness. Givers are seen as being much more content and are calm in their hearts. People sleep better when they feel good about what they have done. They also worry less.

Verse 8 tells us again that God can give us what we need for giving to others. God has all power. He owns everything. We are simply here for a short time on this world. Christians should understand that we just manage what God shares with us. It is a blessing to know that He gives to us. God trusts us to take care of the riches in this world.

We need to understand that our needs are not as great as our wants. We can know by faith that God meets all our needs. The problems happen when we confuse needs with wants. Many of us think we have needs when we really have no needs at all. We must be thankful that God takes care of our basic needs from day to day.

When we are good givers, we can do God’s work for Him in this world. We even have His promise that we will do well and “have enough left over to give when there is a need” (v.8). Because we have learned to give with joy, God can bless us and give us all we need to do good. We become ready to serve Him in wonderful ways. Giving with joy gives us good things in many ways.

When we take care of the motors in our cars, they serve us well. Our cars can travel thousands of miles without

problems. When we take care of our spiritual lives through giving, we can serve our Lord well. This service can be useful for years and years into the future.

Paul uses a well-known sentence from the Old Testament (v.9). This verse is found in Psalm 112:9. It tells about a person who gives with an open heart. This person gives with joy and no one makes him give. The good things that come from the giving last a long time. Because of that kind of giving, the good things of God will last forever. Long after a believer dies, the **results** of his giving continue.

For example, missionaries started working in Nigeria about 150 years ago. At that time, few people in that African country knew the saving power of Jesus. Now there are more than 8,000 Baptist churches in Nigeria. Millions of people know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. So, the giving work of missionaries has strong results years later.

Followers of the Living God who lived **centuries** earlier knew the secrets of giving. They knew that God strongly asked for a happy heart to share our blessings. We need to understand the same truth. We

need to give out of love and not from outside pressure.

### **Giving shows thankfulness to God**

**(9:10–15)**

When we give, others can see we are thankful to God for His blessings. Our giving becomes a sign of the work of God in our lives. When a Christian hospital is built, people in the area know that something special has happened. They understand that believers have stopped doing other things in order to build the most important thing. Lost people feel a need to think about Jesus when they see the giving of Christians.

Paul explains in verses 10–15 that wonderful things happen when one gives. First, our giving makes a difference in the lives of others. Such giving helps them to have faith in their fellow man again. This kind of helping makes them want to get closer to God.

This kind of giving does something for the other believers. We begin to think better of our brothers and sisters in Christ. We have more hope. The early Jerusalem church was happy to know that Gentiles

would give to them. A Gentile is a non-Jewish person. Many of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were not sure that Gentile Christians would show them love. Many were happily surprised to know of this love that was bigger than the difference in the cultures. God brings all kinds of people together at the foot of the cross.

Paul says that God responds to our open-hearted giving. We bring Him joy when we share our blessings with others in need. God agrees to let more blessings come when believers begin and work the plan of sharing. There is a “snowball effect.” That means the blessings start small and get bigger and bigger. We can gain more and more blessings as we share what we have with hurting people.

Lastly, Paul tells us again about the greatest Gift. He never forgets to tell the believers that the Father in heaven gave us His Son. There could never be a greater gift. Now we have a chance to share our gifts with the purpose of telling the importance of His gift. Every time we give as Christians, we reflect something of the greatest gift of all time, Jesus Christ.

## 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

**6** Remember, the man who plants only a few seeds will not have much grain to gather. The man who plants many seeds will have much grain to gather.

**7** Each man should give as he has decided in his heart. He should not give, wishing he could keep it. Or he should not give if he feels he has to give. God loves a man who gives because he wants to give.

**8** God can give you all you need. He will give you more than enough. You will have everything you need for yourselves. And you will have enough left over to give when there is a need.

**9** The Holy Writings say, “He has given much to the poor. His right-standing with God lasts forever.” (Psalm 112:9)

**10** It is God Who gives seed to the man to plant. He also gives the bread to eat. Then we know He will give you more seed to plant and make it grow so you will have more to give away.

**11** God will give you enough so you can always give to others. Then many will give thanks to God for sending gifts through us.

**12** This gift you give not only helps Christians who are in need, but it also helps them give thanks to God.

**13** You are proving by this act of love what you are. They will give thanks to God for your gift to them and to others. This proves you obey the Good News of Christ.

**14** They will pray for you with great love because God has given you His loving-favor.

**15** Thank God for His great Gift.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

### **Memory Verse**

“If anyone wants to be proud, he should be proud of what the Lord has done.”

(2 Corinthians 10:17)

### **Word List**

**boast:** to talk with too much pride

**glorify:** cause to be respected, praised, worshiped;

**criticize:** to say mean things about; give a bad opinion about

# Boast in God, Not in Yourself

We will have problems at times in our churches. We must take care of these problems in ways that honor Christ. We have to be honest, listen well, and respect others’ opinions. We must share the truth and pray for each other. We want the results to **glorify** Jesus Christ rather than win a battle with another person. We must take care of the problems by loving others as Jesus loves us.

### **Paul answers his critics (2 Corinthians 10:1–6)**

One of the hard tasks of life comes when we have to stand up for ourselves. Paul had to do this in front of the Corinthian believers. He took on this task with love and patience. Paul uses a word in verse 1 that talks about being gentle. He means that he is keeping his anger for the right time. He is trying not to be angry at the wrong time.

Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that he wants to treat them as believers and not as the world (v.2). Paul is asking them to use their logic and remember their mission. The Apostle Paul compares the ways of the world with the spiritual life (v.3-4). He tells the believers that the things of God have a power that is much greater than what the world knows.

The Christian who works in the power of the Holy Spirit has great tools. We can pray to ask God to guide us. We can trust God to give us the right words to say. We can ask for God’s safety in hard times. We can ask God for His wisdom to understand difficult problems.

**Things To  
Think About**

1. How do we stop troubles in church before they become serious problems?
2. How can we take care of big problems in a Christ-like way?

A lost person doesn't have these wonderful possibilities. Such a person would not have the Holy Spirit in their lives. That person would not be able to fight with such power. Without Christ, one doesn't know where the real Power is found. Paul tells us that God wins the fight with the devil (v.4).

**What you see is what you get (10:7–11)**

The Apostle Paul now begins to look closely at the hurts caused by others. Some leaders have tried to look better than Paul. They have tried to bring followers to their side. They seem to be saying that Paul was not such a Godly leader. Paul answered by telling people to look at what he has done.

It is not in the spirit of Jesus to hurt the good name of another person. Paul felt that others had tried to **criticize** him. He stood up for himself the same as we do today. Paul simply told them something like this English saying, *what you see is what you get*. The Apostle told the believers they should look at what he had done. They should not listen to these men.

Many times we need to do the same in our world. We should not believe anything being said by anyone. We should make sure what is true and what is false. We don't have to quickly criticize a person. We can think well of them first, then listen to the facts. We must want to think Godly thoughts rather than always thinking the worst of other people.

**Let's boast in what God has done (10:12–18)**

Paul continues with the same logic in verses 12-16. He tells the believers there are limits to any boasting. When we

remember we are a group of forgiven sinners, we will not want to boast. We will be more thankful for His forgiveness and look less on our greatness. In fact, our possible greatness will be as nothing to honor the One who gave us His blessings.

The verses tell us that someone had criticized Paul. They began to compare Paul by worldly ideas. They said he was not a good leader, but they said this when looking at the world's ideas. Paul said clearly that his desire was to follow God's ways. He proved his leadership by being like Christ. The Apostle did not let these mean words hurt him. He used the wisdom of God to answer these people who thought they were good.

Paul wanted to bring healing to this problem quickly in order keep doing his missionary work. He said that he wanted to continue preaching in the other countries (v. 16). Paul was always looking for more chances to tell people about Jesus Christ. He didn't want the Corinthian believers' problems to stop the plan of telling the Good News. We should never let church problems keep us from telling others of the salvation we know in Jesus.

These verses end with one of the great verses of the Bible. Paul continues talking about the same issue as in the earlier verses. Paul says that our pride should be in the Lord (v.17-18). We have no right to boast in our own work. We have no right to boast about ourselves when God is the One who gave us our gifts.

Lastly Paul says that the only important thing is what God thinks of us and not what other people think. We as Christians should remember this truth in every point of life. We try to get friends and make people think great things about us. If we are not careful, we will do this without remembering God's rule of love and honesty. We must follow Christ at all times. God thinking good of us is far sweeter than the friendship of others in this world. His good opinion makes all the difference.

The church at Corinth was filled with people like in our churches. The people were tempted in all sorts of ways. One of those ways was to try to make others take pride in them. We must fight against wanting to look better than others. We need to remember the spirit of Jesus that we see in Philippians 2:5-11. These would be good

verses to read every week of our lives. Our great goal is to be like Christ. We are not made to be like anyone else. If we keep asking Him to help us, we will become more like Christ through the rest of our lives.

### **2 Corinthians 10:1-18**

**1** I, Paul, ask you this myself. I do it through Christ Who is so gentle and kind. Some people say that I am gentle and quiet when I am with you, but that I have no fear and that my language is strong when I am away from you.

**2** Do not make me speak strong words to you when I come. Some people think we want the things of the world because of what we do and say. I have decided to talk to these people if I have to.

**3** It is true, we live in a body of flesh. But we do not fight like people of the world.

**4** We do not use those things to fight with that the world uses. We use the things God gives to fight with and they have power. Those things God gives to fight with destroy the strong-places of the devil.

**5** We break down every thought and proud thing that puts itself up against the wisdom of God. We take hold of every thought and make it obey Christ.

**6** We are ready to punish those who will not obey as soon you obey in everything.

**7** You are seeing things only as men see them. If anyone feels sure he belongs to Christ, he should remember that we belong to Christ also.

**8** I am not ashamed if I say this of myself. The

Lord gave me the right and the power to help you become stronger, not to break you down.

**9** I do not want you to think I am trying to make you afraid with my letters.

**10** They say, “His letters are strong and they make us think. When he is here with us, he is weak and he is hard to listen to.”

**11** What we say in our letter we will do when we get there. They should understand this.

**12** We do not compare ourselves with those who think they are good. They compare themselves with themselves. They decide what they think is good or bad and compare themselves with those ideas. They are foolish.

**13** But we will not talk with pride more than God allows us to. We will follow the plan of the work He has given us to do and you are a part of that work.

**14** We did not go farther than we were supposed to go when we came to you. But we did come to you with the Good News of Christ.

**15** We take no pride in the work others have done there. But we hope your faith will keep growing because of help from others. Then we will grow because of you.

**16** We hope to preach the Good News in the countries on the other side of you. Then we would take no pride in work done by another person in another country.

**17** If anyone wants to be proud, he should be proud of what the Lord has done.

**18** It is not what a man thinks and says of himself that is important. It is what God thinks of him.



Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English

### Bible Text

2 Corinthians  
11:16 – 12:10

### Memory Verse

“He answered me, “I am all you need. I give you my loving-favor. My power works best in weak people.”

(2 Corinthians 12:9a )

### Word List

**depend:** to trust in  
**bother:** to annoy; to cause worry or trouble  
**struggles:** difficult troubles  
**seizures:** a sudden attack of illness such as fainting

# Jesus' Help is All We Need

When we grow in Christ, we will understand many truths. One of these truths is letting God's power work through our lives. We **depend** too often on our own energies. God wants us to trust Him to have His Spirit work through us.

## Suffering for Jesus (11:16–29)

Sometimes the things that **bother** us the most come from people we think are our friends. Paul has to remind the people of his personal history with the Gospel. He doesn't do this to boast. He has to tell the truth to help the people follow Christ. There were many religious leaders of that day who were mean spirited. They wanted the crowds to follow them. They acted as if they were better than others. They were really acting out of pride and didn't follow the love of Jesus.

Paul knew all about these people. He could understand their show and saw it was false. These rabbis strongly asked for greater respect than given to parents. These leaders actually said mean things to the same people who were following them.

These false leaders were always trying to support their own place of power. They said three good things about themselves. Paul was able to say these too. First, the false teachers said they were Jews. Paul was very educated and could speak and read the ancient language of Hebrew. The Apostle Paul was a great Jew.

The false leaders were from the family of Israel. That means they were part of God's chosen people. Paul had lived many years outside of Palestine. He stood up for himself by showing his love for the people. The false teachers were from the

**Things To  
Think About**

1. What are your talents and abilities?
2. Do you let Jesus use them for His glory?

family of Abraham. Paul stood up for himself again. He also talked about these things in Philippians 3:5-6.

Paul goes through a powerful list of his work for the Lord in verses 22-28. He lists more **struggles** not told earlier. Paul had great courage in his service for Jesus Christ. His list of pains included being shipwrecked and stoned. He was also in danger from robbers, and was hungry and thirsty many times.

One of the greatest struggles Paul faced was being beaten. He was whipped five different times and was hit 39 times. One of these kinds of beatings was enough to kill a man. Paul had great strength and courage. The Lord gave Paul the power to stand up to horrible things. The Lord blessed Paul with strength and hope when everything seemed too terrible.

Paul finishes by saying that he is part of the people. He feels their pain and knows their struggles. Paul loves them and helps with their problems.

**Heaven will be greater than we can describe (11:30-12:6)**

Paul continues to boast in how good God is. He says that he knew a person who had the joy of knowing something about heaven. Many believe Paul was talking without pride about himself. Probably this special dream happened at the time of his great suffering for Jesus. Paul wrote that he heard things that cannot be explained. We will never know on this earth exactly what was said. But we will someday understand such joys when we are with our Lord in heaven. We will have joys unexplainable in the languages of this earth.

**A pain that brings Paul to God (12:7-10)**

Here the Apostle Paul discusses a special personal problem.

Paul called it “trouble in my body” (v.7). No one knows what Paul meant. We can list some possible answers. Paul may have been talking about a spiritual or social temptation. He may have been talking about the many people who were against him or about a physical problem.

Whatever the *trouble in the body* was, it was a powerful problem. Paul knew great pain from this problem. Some think he had bad headaches or mental **seizures**. He may have had a fever that would not leave which would take his energy. He needed much energy to do his work for the Lord.

This trouble bothered Paul greatly, but there was hope. Paul knew that he could use the trouble to glorify the Lord. Paul asked the Lord to take away the problem. We often ask our Lord to take away our struggles. Paul understood a special truth that this trouble could be a tool for learning and depending on God’s strength. Paul had peace that God could use him, even with the problem that he so hated.

We can live with our struggles and sufferings without God taking them away. God may want us to live with the problem so that we can grow in our faith. We can show

the world that Jesus lives in us and helps us live with our sufferings. That can be greater than if we had no problems that others could see. God gets the glory when times are tough for us.

### **2 Corinthians 11: 16 – 12: 10**

**16** Let me say it again. Do not think of me as a fool. But if you do, then let this foolish man speak a little about himself.

**17** The Lord has not told me to talk about myself. I am foolish when I do talk about myself like this.

**18** Since the other men tell you all about themselves, I will talk about myself also.

**19** You are so wise! You put up with fools!

**20** You listen to anyone who tells you what to do or makes money off of you or sets a trap for you. You will listen to anyone who makes himself bigger than you or hits you in the face.

**21** I am ashamed to say that I am weak! But I do not do as they do. Whatever they say about themselves, I can say about myself also. (I know what I am saying sounds foolish.)

**22** Are they Jews? So am I. Are they from the family of Israel? So am I. Are they from the family of Abraham? So am I.

**23** Do they work for Christ? I have worked for Him much more than they have. (I speak as if I am crazy.) I have done much more work. I have been in prison more times. I cannot remember how many times I have been whipped. Many times I have been in danger of death.

**24** Five different times the Jews whipped me across my back thirty-nine times.

**25** Three times they beat me with sticks. One time they threw stones at me. Three times I was on ships that were wrecked. I spent a day and a night in the water.

**26** I have made many hard trips. I have been in danger from high water on rivers. I have been in danger from robbers. I have been in danger from the Jews. I have been in danger from people who do not know God. I have been in danger in cities and in the desert. I have been in danger on the sea. I have been in danger among people who say they belong to Christ but do not.

**27** I have worked hard and have been tired and have had pain. I have gone without many times without sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty. I have gone without food and clothes. I have been out in the cold.

**28** More than all these things that have happened to my body, the care of all the churches is heavy on me.

**29** When someone is weak, I feel weak also. When someone is led into sin, I have a strong desire to help him.

**30** If I must talk about myself, I will do it about the things that show how weak I am.

**31** The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be honored and thanked forever. He knows I am telling the truth.

**32** In the city of Damascus the leader of the people under King Aretas put soldiers at the gates to take me.

**33** But I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and I got away.

**12:1** I have to talk about myself, even if it does no good. But I will keep on telling about some

things I saw in a special dream and that which the Lord has shown me.

**2** I know a man who belongs to Christ. Fourteen years ago he was taken up to the highest heaven. (I do not know if his body was taken up or just his spirit. Only God knows.)

**3** I say it again, I know this man was taken up. But I do not know if his body or just his spirit was taken up. Only God knows.

**4** When he was in the highest heaven, he heard things that cannot be told with words. No man is allowed to tell them.

**5** I will be proud about this man, but I will not be proud about myself except to say things which show how weak I am.

**6** Even if I talk about myself, I would not be a fool because it is the truth. But I will say no more because I want no one to think better of me than he does when he sees or hears me.

**7** The things God showed me were so great. But to keep me from being too full of pride because of seeing these things, I have been given trouble in my body. It was sent from Satan to hurt me. It keeps me from being proud.

**8** I asked the Lord three times to take it away from me.

**9** He answered me, "I am all you need. I give you My loving-favor. My power works best in weak people." I am happy to be weak and have troubles so I can have Christ's power in me.

**10** I receive joy when I am weak. I receive joy when people talk against me and make it hard for me and try to hurt me and make trouble for me. I receive joy when all these things come to me because of Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong.



*Adult Bible Study in  
Simplified English*

### **Bible Text**

2 Corinthians  
12:14-13:11

### **Memory Verse**

“We cannot work  
against the truth of  
God. We only work  
for it.”  
(2 Corinthians 13:8)

### **Word List**

**convince:** to make  
someone who is not  
sure feel sure about  
something

**divided:** not  
agreeing, separated by  
problems

# God's Love Helps People Change

We have to remember we can help people, but they have to be willing to change themselves. We cannot make them change. Everyone decides for himself or herself. Also, we have God's wisdom and love to help people to make the right choice. We must work hard to help them at times. God is honored in this.

### **Paul wanted people, not money (2 Corinthians 12:14–18)**

Paul has to talk about the wrong thoughts of the Corinthian Christians. First he showed his thoughtfulness. He said he didn't want to be a heavy load to them on his third visit. Paul told them something very important. He told the Corinthian Church that he wanted them, not their money. Many thought Paul would trick them and take their money.

Paul reminded these believers that Titus also came to help and not to hurt them. Paul and Titus worked together and did what was right. Paul strongly told the believers that he would give everything for them, even himself. No one could do more than that. Such giving is motivated by Jesus Christ who gave Himself for our sins. It is easy to give money. Much more is needed when someone is giving his very life.

Parents know that the greatest gifts they can give to their children are themselves. Sometimes a parent thinks the child will be happy with gifts in boxes. These gifts are used for only a short time. The child wants and needs the human touch. Nothing compares to the love of a parent.

**Things To Think About**

1. How do we help others to change?
2. How do we best lead them to salvation?
3. How can we help our Christian brothers and sisters who have great problems?

The Apostle Paul knew that the Corinthian believers needed the kind of love a parent would give his child. He showed his soft heart for them. Paul could **convince** them that he was an apostle by showing love. We can convince others of the truth of Jesus Christ by our love. The Bible tells us that we should love with our actions (1 John 3:18). Paul went far beyond writing letters like 2 Corinthians. He showed his love in actions. Today, we can best share our faith in Christ by showing our love in actions.

**God has no trouble dealing with you (12:19 - 13:4)**

Paul wasn't writing this letter to stand up for himself. He wrote to the Corinthian believers to see them grow stronger in the Lord. He feared they would still show weakness. Paul listed some of these sins (v. 20-21). None of these sins hurt only the person sinning. Each of these sins hurt others as well.

Paul said that he would be unhappy if he found them in deep sin. It hurt Paul to hear about any social problem because he loved them so much. These problems include fighting and jealousy. They include anger and arguing. No group of people can live in a healthy way with anger and trouble. The church should never become so **divided**.

Paul makes the list of problems longer by adding "talking about each other" (v. 20). This sin hurts greatly if what is said about the person is true but mean. A greater hurt comes from telling lies. A person can be nearly helpless when people say mean things that make them look like a terrible person.

Paul mentions the ugly problems of thinking of oneself as

being too important and making trouble.

The first one happens when people forget to thank and praise God for his gifts. We think wrongly when we are proud of what God has kindly given us. Making trouble is also very ugly. When we are in Christ, we do His work in a nice way. We all have a vote in church, but this doesn't mean we can do anything we want. Such a spirit would lead to trouble. We must listen to Him and work together to do His will. When we work as a team, we will work without trouble.

Next Paul talks about sexual sin (v.21). Many in Corinth during that day were not serious about sex rules. They had sex outside of marriage and showed little guilt for it. Such actions are just like the animals who only want to mate. God wants more for us and has a greater plan for people. We can be far better than animals when we deal with sex issues.

Now Paul gets serious with the Corinthian church (13:1-4). He reminds them that God will have no problem punishing their sinfulness. God is totally full of power. Some thought of our God as being weak because of the cross. Paul clearly says that God is never weak.

### **Give yourselves the test (13:5-13:11)**

Paul ends this letter to the Corinthian believers with his hopes for them. He tells them he hopes they will become strong Christians. Paul says that he hopes they will listen and act. He ends by saying he hopes they live in peace. Each of us needs to test our lives by these ideas. We need to look at our growth in Christ over the last year and ask if we really have grown.

As part of our test we should ask ourselves if we follow the words and spirit of the Bible. Many times we read books or magazines, but not the Bible. We may not understand the will of God because we don't read His Word. God will bless the reading and study of the Holy Bible.

Finally, we should test ourselves in the idea of peace. Are we peaceful in our souls? Are we working for peace with our enemies and our friends? Are we doing what we can to show the peace of Jesus? A strong Christian will think about these ideas. This growing Christian will listen for the still, small voice of God. He will be the truly decide the good and the bad. We will be stronger because we listen and follow Him.

**2 Corinthians 12:14 – 13: 11**

**14** This is the third time I am ready to come to you. I want nothing from you. I want you, not your money. You are my children. Children should not have to help care for their parents. Parents should help their children.

**15** I am glad to give anything I have, even myself, to help you. When I love you more, it looks as if you love me less.

**16** It is true that I was not a heavy load to you. But some say I set a trap for you.

**17** How could I have done that? Did I get anything from you through the men I sent to you?

**18** I asked Titus and the other Christian brother to visit you. Did Titus get anything from you? Did we not do things that showed we had the same desires and followed the same plan?

**19** It may look to you as if we had been trying to make everything look right for ourselves all this time. God knows and so does Christ that all this is done to help you.

**20** I am afraid that when I visit you I will not find you as I would like you to be. And you will not find me as you would like me to be. I am afraid I will find you fighting and jealous and angry and arguing and talking about each other and thinking of yourselves as being too important and making trouble.

**21** I am afraid when I get there God will take all the pride away from me that I had for you. I will not be happy about many who have lived in sin and done sex sins and have had a desire for such things and have not been sorry for their sins and turned from them.

**13:1** This is my third visit to you. The Holy Writings tell us that when people think someone has done wrong, it must be proven by two or three people who saw the wrong being done.

**2** During my second visit I talked to you who have been sinning and to all the others. While I am away, I tell you this again. The next time I come I will be hard on those who sin.

**3** Since you want to know, I will prove to you that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak when He works in your hearts. He uses His power in you.

**4** Christ's weak human body died on a cross. It is by God's power that Christ lives today. We are weak. We are as He was. But we will be alive with Christ through the power God has for us.

**5** Put yourselves through a test. See if you belong to Christ. Then you will know you belong to Christ, unless you do not pass the test.

**6** I trust you see that we belong to Him and have passed the test.

**7** We pray to God that you do no wrong. We do not pray this to show that our teaching is so great, but that you will keep on doing what is right, even if it looks as if we have done much wrong.

**8** We cannot work against the truth of God. We only work for it.

**9** We are glad when we are weak and you are strong. We pray that you will become strong Christians.

**10** This is why I am writing these things while I am away from you. Then when I get there, I will not have to use strong words or punish you to show you that the Lord gives me this power. This power is to be used to make you stronger Christians, not to make you weak by hurting your faith.

**11** Last of all, Christian brothers, good-bye. Do that which makes you complete. Be comforted. Work to get along with others. Live in Peace. The God of love and peace will be with you.