

**Adult
Bible Study
in
Simplified
English**

**Study
Guide**

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The Corinthian Letters

*Important Instructions
for an Imperfect Church*

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

The Corinthian Letters: *Important Instructions for an Imperfect Church*

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Introduction

The Corinthian Letters: Important Instructions for an Imperfect Church

Instructions tell us how to do something. Paul wrote important instructions to the *imperfect* (not perfect) church in the city of Corinth. Corinth was an interesting place. People traveling north or south through Greece had to pass through this area. There were two ports where ships could stop on the east and west. It was a place for people to come when traveling between Rome and the eastern areas. Corinth had people with many different ideas about life and religion. It was a place where they loved rich and powerful people. But it was a very *immoral* (sin-filled) place. Many towns around Corinth were very poor. Yet the people of Corinth had a lot of pride in their city.

In the beginning of Paul's first letter, he worked hard to remind the Corinthian Christians that they were part of something larger than Corinth. They were part of the Church which is made up of all Christians. Corinth probably had several house churches which met in the homes of some of the richer Christians. This means it would be easy for them to have trouble and divide. Paul wrote strong words in these two letters — First and Second Corinthians — to help them with these problems and more.

We are all imperfect. We can learn so much about living the Christian life from Paul, Timothy, and the Corinthian church. But these instructions are not just from Paul; they come from God. The Bible is our instruction book from God. It is important to learn from these instructions — and then do them.

About the Writer

*A long-time editor and writer for the Simplified English curriculum, **Janet Roberts** wrote the Study Guide for **The Corinthian Letters**. Janet is the Director of Prestonwood Literacy Missions at Prestonwood Baptist Church and has taught English as a Second Language since she was a missionary in Japan in 1976. She is also a trainer in ESL with the North American Mission Board and Dallas Baptist Association, teaching workshops in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Janet and her husband, Doug, live in Plano, Texas, and have two daughters, two sons-in-law, two sons, and two granddaughters.*

Overview

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Word List

Lesson 1

blessing: to ask God to do good for a person or group of people in a loving way

brag: to say that you are more special or more important than others

Church: all true Christians everywhere in the world; sometimes called the universal church

church: a group of true Christians that meets together in one place; sometimes called the local church

united: together as one group, not divided

Lesson 2

defend: to speak or write in support of someone or something that is being challenged or criticized

immoral: bad, wrong, sin-filled; not good or right

morally: to act or behave in a way that is good and right

Passover: a special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt; also, the event reminds Jews of God's protection during the final plague in Egypt

toxic: poisonous; something that could hurt or kill someone

Lesson 3

advice: an opinion or suggestion about what someone should do

encourage: to make someone more hopeful by helping or by giving words of praise and confidence

focus: to set one's mind on one thing and make that the most important

single: any person who is not married; can also mean someone who is not in a romantic relationship

Lesson 4

allowed: to let be done or to let have, to say *yes* instead of *no* when asked

freedom: being free to say, do, or have what one wants

idols: something made to be worshiped as a god; something that is more important than the One True God in a person's life

miracle: something that happens that only God could do, impossible for a person to make happen

Lesson 5

arguing: not agreeing and fighting with words

jealous: unhappy because someone has something you would like; also called envy

mystery: something that is not known or is difficult to explain

provide: give what is needed, support

Lesson 6

apostles: special followers of Jesus who were the first Christian leaders of the Church

disasters: terrible happenings on the earth that cause much damage and suffering

proof: anything that can be used to show that something is true

resurrection: being raised from the dead, coming back to new life

Lesson 7

greeting: polite or friendly words spoken to someone when you meet; words used in the first part of a letter

hymn: a song praising or honoring God

purpose: the reason or use for something

violent: showing strong feelings with actions that cause hurt and pain

Word List

Lesson 8

explain: to make clear or give the meaning of something

protect: to keep from harm or danger; to defend from anything that would hurt

punish: to make suffer pain or loss for doing something wrong, bad, or sinful, so that one will learn to do right

relationship: the way in which two or more people talk to, behave toward, or deal with each other

Lesson 9

generous: willing to give or share well, not selfish or greedy

greedy: wanting or taking all that one can get with no thought of what others need or want

measure: to learn the facts about something by comparing it to something else; here, ministry is compared to Christian ideas from Jesus

ministry: what a preacher or person serving Jesus does to help others and tell the Good News about Jesus

Lesson 10

eternal: lasting forever; without an end

eternity: the time after death that has no end

fix: to make right again, make whole or like new again

modern: having to do with the present time we live in; changed or different from older times

Lesson 11

healthy: doing something that keeps one well in body and mind and does not make one sick

urgency: the need for quick action; to do it now or perhaps something bad will happen

victims: those who are hurt or killed or the family of those hurt or killed because of crimes or disasters

Lesson 12

attitude: a feeling or way of thinking that affects one's actions

faithful: having or showing true and constant support or loyalty; keeping promises or doing what you are supposed to do

grace: loving-favor of God; help or kindness that God gives or shows to people

improve: to make or become better

privilege: a special right or favor given to a person or group

wealthy: very rich, having a lot of money

Lesson 13

amazed: feeling or showing great surprise, especially when something seems impossible or not normal or not likely to happen

depends: to put one's trust in and look to for help

disability: not being able to do something in the normal way because a part of the body does not work correctly

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

“... I ask you with all my heart in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to agree among yourselves.” (1 Corinthians 1:10)

Lesson 2

“Christ made us right with God and set us apart for God and made us holy. Christ bought us with His blood and made us free from our sins.” (1 Corinthians 1:30*b*)

Lesson 3

“While you live in this world, live as if the world has no hold on you. The way of this world will soon be gone.”
(1 Corinthians 7:31)

Lesson 4

“So if you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything to honor God.”
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Lesson 5

“And now we have these three: faith and hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Lesson 6

“But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow.” (1 Corinthians 15:20)

Lesson 7

“He gives us comfort in all our troubles. Then we can comfort other people who have the same troubles.” (2 Corinthians 1:4)

Lesson 8

“God is the One Who makes our faith and your faith strong in Christ.”
(2 Corinthians 1:21)

Memory Verses

Lesson 9

“We know we are not able in ourselves to do any of this work. God makes us able to do these things.” (2 Corinthians 3:5)

Lesson 10

“Our life is lived by faith. We do not live by what we see in front of us.”
(2 Corinthians 5:7)

Lesson 11

“All this comes from God. ...He did this through Christ. Then He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.”
(2 Corinthians 5:18)

Lesson 12

“God loves a man who gives because he wants to give.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Lesson 13

“He answered me, ‘I am all you need. I give you My loving-favor. My power works best in weak people.’” (2 Corinthians 12:9)



*Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English*

UNIT 1 Reports and Questions

Lesson 1

Get Together
(1 Corinthians 1:1-17;
3:1-4)

Lesson 2

Live Morally
in an Immoral World
(1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

Lesson 3

Be Christian, Whether
Married or Single
(1 Corinthians 7:1-17,
25-35)

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Look Carefully
at Life's Gray Areas
(1 Corinthians 8:1-13;
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Use Gifts of the Spirit
for the Shared Good
(1 Corinthians 12:1-14;
12:27 to 13:3)

Lesson 6

Have Hope in the
Resurrection
(1 Corinthians 15:3-20,
35-44, 50-57)

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Reports and Questions

Paul wrote this letter of 1 Corinthians because he had heard about the problems in the churches of Corinth. Also, they had sent questions to him. From what Paul says, we know there were reports that they were divided (1 Corinthians 1:10). There were reports of immorality (5:1). There were reports that they did not believe in the resurrection (15:12). We know that the Corinthian Christians asked questions about marriage (7:1, 25), about eating food that had been given to false gods (8:1), and about the gifts of the Holy Spirit (12:1).

Paul started the church in Corinth on his second missionary trip (Acts 18:1-18). He spent 18 months in Corinth teaching the church. Then he left to do more missionary work. The problems began while Paul was away. After getting some reports, he wrote them at least one letter before this one. They were not happy about some of the things he wrote in the letter. Paul had to tell them that it was important for them to listen to him because God was speaking to them through him. Sometimes Paul used strong words to make them understand.

Some things are hard for us to understand, too, but let us try as we study 1 Corinthians together.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 1:1-17;
3:1-4

Memory Verse

“... I ask you with all my heart in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to agree among yourselves.”
(1 Corinthians 1:10)

Word List

blessing: to ask God to do good for a person or group of people in a loving way

brag: to say that you are more special or more important than others

Church: all true Christians everywhere in the world; sometimes called the universal church

church: a group of true Christians that meets together in one place; sometimes called the local church

Get Together

God wants all Christians to get together. This means God’s **Church** needs to start together, agree together, and grow together. The opposite of this is to be divided.

The history of the Church shows us that Christians have not been good about getting together and staying together. There have been many times when the Church divided into groups that did not agree with each other. As a teenager, I saw this for myself. My **church** could not agree on what the Holy Spirit did in the life of Christians or how to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A small group divided from the larger group. Then some of those people left to start a new church. It is always sad when churches divide because of disagreements.

This is what Paul saw happening. This is what he wanted to stop from happening as he started the first of these two letters.

Start Together (1:1-9)

Paul, the missionary of Jesus Christ chosen by God, and his friend wrote this letter to God’s church in the city of Corinth. As we already learned, Corinth was a big city and must have had many churches. But Paul wanted to talk about them as one big group. He also included “all Christians everywhere who call on the name of Jesus Christ.” He was writing to a much larger group as if they were together.

Today that group — the Church — has grown to billions of people, but Paul started with all of them together as one. He wanted the Church to know how God sees it.

united: together as one group, not divided

Things to Think About

1. Have you seen or been part of a church that divided? What happened?
2. How can the Church show the world that it is united? Give some examples.
3. What is the most important truth that can keep churches united?
4. In what ways are people different from each other in your church? Do these differences make it hard to be united? Why or why not?

The Church is God's group here on earth. There are many different Christian churches all over the world. But one truth brings all Christians together: Jesus Christ is Lord. This makes God's Church **united**. They belong to Him (verses 2, 4).

Paul gave a **blessing** of peace and loving-favor from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He followed this with thanking God for them. He told how their lives were rich. This did not mean that they had a lot of money. Some may have had a lot of money, but Paul meant they were rich in the things of God. Their lives were "rich in every way" because they had a "good understanding" and the power to speak for God.

God had given them all that they needed to live the Christian life at that time. He would give them all that they needed in the future. Paul showed them that God had changed their lives, just as he (Paul) had said. He had taught them about Christ. Everything he told them was true. They could be sure that everything he told them about the future would happen, too. God had given them the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help them. Christ would keep them strong. All this and more was theirs while they waited for Christ to come again.

God is faithful as all Christians are joined together by their common belief in Jesus. We are all to work together with Jesus Christ as Lord!

Agree Together (1:10-17)

Paul begged the Christians to agree together. This was so important that he asked with all his heart and in the name of Jesus Christ. It was important not to be divided into different groups.

It is important to work at agreeing so that the church thinks and acts like it has only one mind. But this can be very hard.

Paul gave examples of how difficult it was for the Corinthians. He heard that they divided into groups, with each group following a different leader.

This happens today, too. A leader will gather followers. They will be so proud of him and of what he says and does that they **brag** about being his followers. They forget who their true leader is — Jesus Christ. They forget we are all *His* followers.

Jesus Christ is not divided! No other leader was put on the cross to die for the sins of the world! No other name is used for baptism! No preacher who uses big-sounding words can save people. Only the power of the cross of Christ can save.

These are the answers to Paul's questions. These are the ideas that Christians must agree on. This will not divide but will unite believers in Christ.

Grow Up Together (3:1-4)

Paul uses the phrase “Christian brothers” many times in these letters. He was not talking only to men. Paul was talking as if to family members. He saw the

church as the family of God.

“Baby Christians” is another phrase Paul uses. He told them they needed to grow more than they had. They had not yet grown to be full adults in their faith. They needed to obey the teachings Paul gave them. They needed to stop being jealous. They needed to stop being divided. They needed to finish with the easy milk of easy teaching and move on to the harder meat of obeying more difficult teachings. They needed to grow up together.

Isn't this true today? We see so many divisions in the Church and in churches. We see grown people fighting like children about ideas that are not important. The Bible gives both milk and meat. Christians need to start on the milk, but then careful study of the teachings in God's Word gives the meat needed to grow. Each person can only grow up as they obey these teachings.

It is not easy, but the Church must find a way to agree about these teachings. There is so much to learn. There is so much to do. There is no time for fighting and dividing when the rest of the world has not heard about Jesus. Those who are not Christians are dying in their sin while the

Church fights. How terrible! Grow up, eat meat, and then share it with the world!

1 Corinthians 1:1-17; 3:1-4

1 This letter is from Paul. I have been chosen by God to be a missionary of Jesus Christ. Sosthenes, a Christian brother, writes also.

2 I write to God's church in the city of Corinth. I write to those who belong to Christ Jesus and to those who are set apart by Him and made holy. I write to all the Christians everywhere who call on the name of Jesus Christ. He is our Lord and their Lord also.

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

4 I am thankful to God all the time for you. I am thankful for the loving-favor God has given to you because you belong to Christ Jesus.

5 He has made your lives rich in every way. Now you have power to speak for Him. He gave you good understanding.

6 This shows that what I told you about Christ and what He could do for you has been done in your lives.

7 You have the gifts of the Holy Spirit that you need while you wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to come again.

8 Christ will keep you strong until He comes again. No blame will be held against you.

9 God is faithful. He chose you to be joined together with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

10 Christian brothers, I ask you with all my heart in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to agree among yourselves. Do not be divided into little groups. Think and act as if you all had the same mind.

11 My Christian brothers, I have heard from

some of Chloe's family that you are arguing among yourselves.

12 I hear that some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul," and "I am a follower of Apollos," and "I am a follower of Peter," and "I am a follower of Christ."

13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul put on a cross to die for your sins? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I am thankful to God that I baptized Crispus and Gaius only.

15 No one can say that you were baptized in the name of Paul.

16 I remember I did baptize the family of Stephanas, but I do not remember baptizing any others.

17 Christ did not send me to baptize. He sent me to preach the Good News. I did not use big sounding words when I preached. If I had, the power of the cross of Christ would be taken away.

3:1 Christian brothers, I could not speak to you as to full-grown Christians. I spoke to you as men who have not obeyed the things you have been taught. I spoke to you as if you were baby Christians.

2 My teaching was as if I were giving you milk to drink. I could not give you meat because you were not ready for it. Even yet you are not able to have anything but milk.

3 You still live as men who are not Christians. When you are jealous and fight with each other, you are still living in sin and acting like sinful men in the world.

4 When one says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I am a follower of Apollos," does not this sound like the talk of baby Christians?



Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Memory Verse

“Christ made us right with God and set us apart for God and made us holy. Christ bought us with His blood and made us free from our sins.”
(1 Corinthians 1:30b)

Word List

defend: to speak or write in support of someone or something that is being challenged or criticized

immoral: bad, wrong, sin-filled; not good or right

morally: to act or behave in a way that is good and right

Passover: a special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt;

Live Morally in an Immoral World

When a church is not united and not growing together in Christ, there are often many problems. Paul talks about some of them in the first four chapters of this letter to the church in Corinth. He wanted to help them with their problems by teaching them important truths. At the same time, he wanted others to know these teachings so they could handle problems in their churches. When a church is united and growing together in Christ, some people in the church can have these problems. People are sinners, so churches have to deal with sins.

What should a church do with those who call themselves Christians and continue to do things they know are wrong without stopping or feeling any shame?

Family Doing What? (5:1-2)

Christ Jesus paid for all sin on the cross so that Christians could be free not to sin. This does not mean Christians are perfect. It means that with God’s power, Christians can start being holy. *Holy* means being different in a good way from those who are not Christians. To be holy means seeking God’s help to do what is right and good every day.

Something very bad was happening in the church in Corinth. Paul was told that a man, who called himself a Christian, was treating his father’s wife (probably not his own mother) like she was his wife. This is a sin that even non-Christians would hate. The church was bragging that they still loved this man and

also, the event reminds Jews of God's protection during the final plague in Egypt
toxic: poisonous; something that could hurt or kill someone

Things to Think About

1. Do you know a church that brags? What do they brag about?
2. Have you heard of a church asking one of their members to leave? What happened?
3. Do you think it is easy to be holy? Why or why not?
4. What can you do if sin is a problem in your life?
5. Who should talk to the person in the church who is living an immoral life?
6. Why is it important to keep the church pure? Why is it important for each person to live morally?

treated him well. They did not ask him to stop his sinful actions. They did not ask him to leave the church.

Paul could not believe what he heard. The church's actions were sending the wrong message to the people who were not Christians. By not challenging this sinful man, the church was telling non-Christians that Christians think terrible sex sins are not a problem. This was not right, and Paul had to use strong words to correct their thinking.

Toxic: Be Very Careful (5:3-8)

A church in our area had a problem like this. One of their leaders was caught paying for a young prostitute. The church found out about the same time that the news stations reported it. The people of the church were terribly hurt. They did not brag about it or **defend** him. They fired him and told him he must leave the church. It was not easy, but these verses had taught them the best way to deal with this kind of problem in the church. They gave help to him and his family, but they could not allow him to stay in the church.

Paul wrote very strong and clear words. Churches cannot allow these kinds of sins to continue. Something must be done quickly. Sin of this kind is **toxic**. If it is allowed to continue, it can spread from one person to the next. Allowing this sin to continue would change the church and fill it with sin and unhappiness.

Paul compared sin to yeast, which grows and grows until it changes the whole loaf of bread. In the same way, sin can spread from person to person, affecting the whole church.

But without this yeast, this sin, the church could be holy again. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to remove the sin immediately.

Paul talked about the **Passover**, when a lamb was killed in Egypt. Its blood saved the people from a horrible plague which would have killed the first-born in each family. In the years that followed, the Jews observed the Passover meal. They would recall how they made bread without yeast because they did not have time for it to rise properly before they left Egypt.

Jesus Christ is the Passover lamb for us. He died to save us from our sins. He wants His church to be pure and holy.

Acting God's Way (5:9-13)

It is very important that Christians live **morally** in this **immoral** world. Christians must be different. Christians must be holy. The church must be filled with moral people.

It is not hard to find immoral actions outside the church. Just as in the days of Paul, sin is everywhere in our world today. Paul told Christians to stay away from people who live immorally if they call

themselves a Christian.

People should be able to see how a person lives and know by watching him if he is a Christian or not. Not everyone who lives morally is a Christian, but those who are Christians should not live immoral lives. It hurts them. It hurts the church. It hurts the name of Christ. That is why living morally is so important.

Christians do not need to judge the world. God is the judge. But the church needs to know about and judge the actions of its own people. God will forgive His people when they repent (1 John 1:9). To *repent* means to tell God that you have sinned and then to turn away from that sin and do better. If people in the church will not repent and keep living in their sin, then the church must take action.

In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus tells how to deal with such a person in the church. One person talks to that person. If that person doesn't listen, then two or three people go and talk to the person. If the person still will not repent, then the problem is taken to the church and the person must answer for his actions. If the person does not want to repent, then he is to

be thought of as one who does not know God.

Acting God's way is not easy, but it is possible. He has given the Holy Spirit Who gives us the power to live a holy life.

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

1 Someone has told me about a sex sin among you. It is so bad that even the people who do not know God would not do it. I have been told that one of the men is living with his father's wife as if she were his wife.

2 Instead of being sorry, you are proud of yourselves. The man who is living like that should be sent away from you.

3 I am far from you. Even if I am not there, my spirit is with you. I have already said that the man is guilty of this sin. I am saying this as if I were there with you.

4 Call a meeting of the church. I will be with you in spirit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His power,

5 hand this person over to the devil. His body is to be destroyed so his spirit may be saved on the day the Lord comes again.

6 It is not good for you to be proud of the way things are going in your church. You know a little yeast makes the whole loaf of bread rise.

7 Clean out the old yeast. Then you will be new

bread with none of the old yeast in you. The Jews killed lambs when they left Egypt. Christ is our lamb. He has already been killed as a gift on the altar to God for us.

8 Bread with yeast in it is like being full of sin and hate. Let us eat this supper together with bread that has no yeast in it. This bread is pure and true.

9 I told you in my letter not to keep on being with people who do any kind of sex sins.

10 I was not talking about people doing sex sins who are bad people of this world. I was not talking about people of this world who always want to get more or those who get things in a wrong way or those who worship false gods. To get away from people like that you would have to leave this world!

11 What I wrote was that you should not keep on being with a person who calls himself a Christian if he does any kind of sex sins. You should not even eat with a person who says he is a Christian but always wants to get more of everything or uses bad language or who gets drunk or gets things in a wrong way.

12 It is not for me to judge those outside the church. You are to judge those who belong to the church.

13 God will judge those outside the church. So you must put that sinful person out of your church.



Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

1 Corinthians 7:1-17,
25-35

Memory Verse

“While you live in this world, live as if the world has no hold on you. The way of this world will soon be gone.”

(1 Corinthians 7:31)

Word List

advice: an opinion or suggestion about what someone should do

encourage: to make someone more hopeful by helping or by giving words of praise and confidence

focus: to set one’s mind on one thing and make that the most important

single: any person who is not married; can also mean someone who is not in a romantic relationship

Be Christian, Whether Married or Single

“I, Janet, take you, Doug, to be my husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, from this day forward until death do us part.”

These are the words I said to my husband more than 32 years ago. These same words are used in many weddings in the United States. They are part of the promises we call *vows*. Many who are **single** want to say these words some day. There are some, though, who may never want to say these words or any others in a wedding. Some people are truly happy to be single.

To Have and to Hold (7:1-9)

“Should I get married? If yes, whom should I marry? If no, what should I do as a single person?” These are very important questions, and the answers are even more important.

The verses in this lesson tell us that Paul was answering questions the Corinthians had asked. But we only have his answers. We can try to guess what the questions were.

They may have asked Paul what he thought about getting married or staying single. He answered this again and again in different ways, but the main idea was that each person should stay as they are now. This meant those who were married should stay married and those who were single should stay single.

This was a time of difficult change. Some husbands became Christians, but their wives did not. Some wives became

Things to Think About

1. Do troubles and problems in this world make you feel better or worse about staying single or about getting married?
2. What are some ways that single people can better focus on and work for God? Is it easier to be single?
3. What are some ways that married people serve or work for God? Is it easier to be married?
4. How do you spend your time? What is your focus?

Christians, but their husbands did not. Christians had many troubles and problems from both Jews and those who believed in other gods. Paul's **advice** was to not make many more changes at that time. If someone was married, stay married. If someone was single, stay single. Serve God just as you are.

There was a pattern in what Paul said. He would often say, "It is good... but..." He said this about getting married. He said this about being single or being a widow. This was Paul's advice.

Another question may have been about husbands and wives being together intimately. There may have been those who thought that a good Christian husband and wife were not to share sexual relations with each other. Paul's answer was very strong: Married Christians must please each other as husbands and wives. Their bodies belong to each other. This was important to keep each husband and wife from sinning by looking for intimacy with another person. Married couples were not to stay apart unless they both agreed to do so for a short time of prayer.

Until Death Do Us Part (7:10-17)

Paul answered the next question in a strong way. Wives were not to leave their husbands. Husbands were not to divorce their wives. These were words from the Lord, not just advice from Paul. If an unbelieving spouse wanted to leave, let them go. But if divorce happened, Paul advised the divorced spouse not to marry another person but to try to get back together.

These are good but strong words for us today. Divorce has hurt so many families. It has made too much trouble for all of us. There are other teachings from Jesus about divorce in Matthew 5,

19, Luke 16, and Mark 10. Paul's answer made these teachings very clear.

The next question is almost the same, but it has to do with only one spouse being a Christian. This was true in my own family. My mother was a very strong believer, but my father was not a Christian. My mother often read this part of Paul's letter for help and courage during the hard times. We all prayed that my father would become a Christian. God answered our prayers, and my father joined the family of God when I was a young teenager. It was a wonderful day. We were all so thankful that God's Word had guided my mother and helped to make her strong as she waited.

Single-Minded Love for God (7:25-35)

Paul wrote that being single is a gift (v. 7). There are more verses about gifts of the Spirit in chapters 12-14, but this one gift is not listed there. The gift of singleness was a gift that Paul had. It was a gift that he wanted others to have and use — the gift of being single for God.

Again, Paul **encouraged** his readers to stay as they were when they became a Christian. He said this was his own advice on their question. If they were single and

decided to get married, it was not a sin.

They could choose one or the other. But choosing to be single would give them more time to work for God. Married people must make time for their spouses, but single people can **focus** more on God. Of course, married people should serve God, too.

There was so much work to do for God in Paul's day, just as there is now.

Paul's advice focused on not getting married. It isn't easy to understand this advice, but the final answer is to focus on the best way to love and serve God. He knows what is best for each of our lives!

1 Corinthians 7:1-17, 25-35

1 You asked me some questions in your letter. This is my answer. It is good if a man does not get married.

2 But because of being tempted to sex sins, each man should get married and have his own wife. Each woman should get married and have her own husband.

3 The husband should please his wife as a husband. The wife should please her husband as a wife.

4 The wife is not the boss of her own body. It belongs to the husband. And in the same way, the husband is not the boss of his own body. It belongs to the wife.

5 Do not keep from each other that which belongs to each other in marriage unless you agree for awhile so you can use your time to pray. Then come together again or the devil will tempt you to do that which you know you should not do.

6 This is what I think. I am not saying you must do it.

7 I wish everyone were as I am, but each has his own gift from God. One has one gift. Another has another gift.

8 This is what I say to those who are not married and to women whose husbands have died. It is good if you do not get married. I am not married.

9 But if you are not able to keep from doing that which you know is wrong, get married. It is better to get married than to have such strong sex desires.

10 I have this to say to those who are married. These words are from the Lord. A wife should not leave her husband,

11 but if she does leave him, she should not get married to another man. It would be better for her to go back to her husband. The husband should not divorce his wife.

12 I have this to say. These words are not from the Lord. If a Christian husband has a wife who is not a Christian, and she wants to live with him, he must not divorce her.

13 If a Christian wife has a husband who is not a Christian, and he wants to live with her, she must not divorce him.

14 The husband who is not a Christian is set apart from the sin of the world because of his Christian wife. The wife who is not a Christian is set apart from the sin of the world because of her Christian husband. In this way, the lives of the children are not unclean because of sin, they are clean.

15 If the one who is not a Christian wants to leave, let that one go. The Christian husband or wife should not try to make the other one stay. God wants you to live in peace.

16 Christian wife, how do you know you will not help your husband to become a Christian? Or Christian husband, how do you know you will not help your wife to become a Christian?

17 Everyone should live the life the Lord gave to him. He should live as he was when he became a Christian. This is what I teach in all

the churches.

25 I have no word from the Lord about women or men who have never been married. I will tell you what I think. You can trust me because the Lord has given me His loving-kindness.

26 I think, because of the troubles that are coming, it is a good thing for a person not to get married.

27 Are you married to a wife? Do not try to get a divorce. If you are not married, do not look for a wife.

28 If you do get married, you have not sinned. If a woman who is not married gets married, it is no sin. But being married will add problems. I would like to have you free from such problems.

29 I mean this, Christian brothers. The time is short. A married man should use his time as if he did not have a wife.

30 Those who have sorrow should keep on working as if they had no sorrow. Those who have joy should keep on working as if there was no time for joy. Those who buy should have no time to get joy from what they have.

31 While you live in this world, live as if the world has no hold on you. The way of this world will soon be gone.

32 I want you to be free from the cares of this world. The man who is not married can spend his time working for the Lord and pleasing Him.

33 The man who is married cares for the things of the world. He wants to please his wife.

34 Married women and women who have never been married are different. The woman who has never been married can spend her time working for the Lord. She wants to please the Lord with her body and spirit. The woman who is married cares for the things of the world. She wants to please her husband.

35 I am saying these things to help you. I am not trying to keep you from getting married. I want you to do what is best. You should work for Him without other things taking your time.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 8:1-13;
10:23-33

Memory Verse

“So if you eat or drink
or whatever you do,
do everything to
honor God.”

(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Word List

allowed: to let be
done or to let have; to
say *yes* instead of *no*
when asked

freedom: being free
to say, do, or have
what one wants

idols: something made
to be worshiped as a
god; something that is
more important than
the One True God in a
person's life

miracle: something
that happens that only
God could do;
impossible for a
person to make
happen

Look Carefully at Life's Gray Areas

Sometimes we say that there are black and white areas in life. The black area represents things that are wrong—like murdering, stealing, lying, and cheating. The white area represents good things—like loving, honesty, and helping others.

But what about the things that some people think are right and others think are wrong? These are called gray areas. These are things in life that not everyone agrees on. Is it wrong to drink alcohol? Is it wrong to go to parties? Is it right to play an electric guitar? Is it right to eat any kind of food?

What do we do when the Bible does not tell us whether something is right or wrong? Should we do anything we are free to do, as long as we believe it is not wrong?

A Question about Freedom (8:1-13)

The Corinthian Christians had a question about a gray area in their lives. Corinth had many **idols**. People worshiped idols by offering meat to be put in a fire. The cooked meat would be eaten by the idol priests and their families. But often, there was too much meat. The extra meat would be sold. Was it right to buy and eat this meat? Was it right to eat at the idol temple?

The Christians had learned many good lessons from Paul. They knew there is only One True God. They knew the idols were nothing. Jesus taught, “You will know the truth and the truth will make you free” (John 8:32). The food given to idols was just food. The believers were free to eat any food. They

**Things to
Think About**

1. Have you ever seen an idol? What do you think when people give food and bow down to worship something that is made by man?
2. What is most important in your life?
3. What other gray areas can you think of that may be like the food given to idols in Paul's day?
4. Does Christian freedom really allow us to do whatever we want? What might make us decide not to do something that we are allowed to do?
5. Read Matthew 22:38-39. How is this like the lesson that Paul was teaching the Corinthians?

thought they knew everything about God's **freedom**.

Paul had another lesson to teach: Love is most important. Loving God is more important than just knowing God. Loving other people means putting their needs ahead of our wants.

Before my father became a Christian, he would drink alcohol and not stop until he was drunk. He was an angry drunk who made us all afraid. But when my father gave his life to Jesus, God helped him to stop drinking. It was a **miracle**.

As a Christian, he was free to drink alcohol. The Bible says that Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding. But just one drink could make my father fall back into sin. My father thanked God for his Baptist church where people did not drink alcohol or wine. Drinking alcohol would be wrong for him and for those with him. His church learned this lesson from Paul.

Playing an electric guitar does not seem so bad. But for someone who had a drug problem while in a rock band, playing an electric guitar might be wrong. It might lead them back to sin.

Paul's point was, while it may be okay to do something, we should avoid it if it causes a brother to sin. It is more important to show love toward those who have problems in their past. That love is more important than exercising our freedom to eat, drink, or do anything that might make another fall into sin.

Some Corinthian Christians had past problems. They worshiped idols as if they were God. Paul called them weak Christians because they might fall back into past sins. Paul advised that it may be wrong for them to eat food or meat in the idol's temple. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to think about this: Will my action make a weaker Christian fall into sin?

If the answer was *yes* or *maybe*, then Paul said love tells us not to do it. Do not do anything that will make a brother or sister in Christ fall into sin.

Wrong or Right? (10:23-28)

Some things are **allowed**, but that does not mean they are good. The lesson is clear: The way to know if something is wrong or right is to think of others, not just yourself. If you do this, will it make others become stronger Christians? How will this make a difference for someone else? Will it make someone want to become a Christian or not? These are important questions.

Paul said sometimes it was better not to ask questions. Paul's example was to simply buy or eat any food when invited. Do not ask where it came from because the food would be good no matter where it came from. Everything belongs to the One True God, and He made it for us. But if someone said food came from idol worship, then it was better not to eat it. Think about others first, not your freedom to eat.

Freedom to Help, Not Hurt (10:29-30)

Freedom is best when it does not hurt other people. We thank God for all He has

given us. We thank God for our food before we eat. Why shouldn't we eat and drink whatever we ask God to bless? Because the feelings of others are important. We do not want to hurt the faith of others. We want others to come to faith. We want others to grow in their faith. Not eating something is a small price to pay for helping another person become a strong believer!

Freedom Not to Do It (10:31-33)

My children used to think I always told them *no* when they asked to do something. They thought I would not allow any freedom because they were Christians. I did not want them to feel like they could not do fun things, so I told them the truth. Their non-Christian friends were the ones who did not have freedom. They did wrong things because they were weak and would fall into sin. I wanted my children to understand it is better to choose to do right!

As Christians, God makes us strong against sin. We have freedom. God gives us the power to do what honors Him. We can be happy because we are free not to sin. We can choose to do what is best for everyone, then God can work His best in their lives, too. Do all to honor God!

1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:23-33

1 I want to write about food that has been given as a gift in worship to a false god. We all know something about it. Knowing about it makes one feel important. But love makes one strong.

2 The person who thinks he knows all the answers still has a lot to learn.

3 But if he loves God, he is known by God also.

4 What about food that has been given as a gift to a false god in worship? Is it right? We know that a false god is not a god at all. There is only one God! There is no other.

5 Men have thought there are many such gods and lords in the sky and on the earth.

6 But we know there is only one God. He is the Father. All things are from Him. He made us for Himself. There is one Lord. He is Jesus Christ. He made all things. He keeps us alive.

7 Not all men know this. They have given food as a gift in worship to a god as if the god were alive. Some men have done this all their lives. If they eat such food, their hearts tell them it is wrong.

8 Food will not bring us near to God. We are no worse if we do not eat it, or we are no better if we eat it.

9 Since you are free to do as you please, be careful that this does not hurt a weak Christian.

10 A Christian who is weak may see you eat food in a place where it has been given as a gift to false gods in worship. Since he sees you eat it, he will eat it also.

11 You may make the weak Christian fall into sin by what you have done. Remember, he is a Christian brother for whom Christ died.

12 When you sin against a weak Christian by making him do what is wrong, you sin against Christ.

13 So then, if eating meat makes my Christian

brother trip and fall, I will never eat it again. I do not want to make my Christian brother sin.

10:23 We are allowed to do anything, but not everything is good for us to do. We are allowed to do anything, but not all things help us grow strong as Christians.

24 Do not work only for your own good. Think of what you can do for others.

25 Eat any meat that is sold in the stores. Ask no questions about it. Then your heart will not say it is wrong.

26 The Holy Writings say, "The earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord." (Psalm 24:1)

27 If a person who is not a Christian wants you to eat with him, and you want to go, eat anything that is on the table. Ask no questions about the food. Then your heart will not say it is wrong.

28 But if someone says, "This meat has been given as a gift to false gods in worship," do not eat it. In that way, it will not hurt the faith of the one who told you and his heart will have peace.

29 How the other person feels is important. We are not free to do things that will hurt another person.

30 If I can give thanks to God for my food, why should anyone say that I am wrong about eating food I can give thanks for?

31 So if you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything to honor God.

32 Do nothing that would make trouble for a Greek or for a Jew or for the church of God.

33 I want to please everyone in all that I do. I am not thinking of myself. I want to do what is best for them so they may be saved from the punishment of sin .



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 12:1-14;
12:27 to 13:3

Memory Verse

“And now we have these three: faith and hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.”

(1 Corinthians 13:13)

Word List

arguing: not agreeing and fighting with words

jealous: unhappy because someone has something you would like; also called envy

mystery: something that is not known or is hard to explain

provide: give what is needed, support

Use Gifts of the Spirit for the Shared Good

When I was a teenager, my church split because of an argument over understanding the Holy Spirit. This was especially sad, because God sent the Holy Spirit to unite all Christians. Yet my church let it divide them.

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to believers so the church can work together as one body. True unity is found through the Spirit.

A church can work together in wonderful ways. One time, a young man who was mostly blind moved to our area. Chuck came with just his clothes. He had rented an apartment, but he had nothing to put in it. He knew God would **provide** what he needed. He had the gifts of faith and helping. The church hired him, and Chuck started using his gift of helping that same day. But he had no idea just how God was going to provide for him.

God did provide through His body, the church. People with the gift of sharing gave furniture and food. People with the gift of helping took him to his apartment and moved furniture. People with the gifts of faith and speaking God’s Word encouraged him. By the end of the day, he had everything he needed to live. By the end of the month, he had an apartment full of furniture. God’s people worked together as one body using their gifts.

Understanding the Holy Spirit (12:1-11)

It is important to understand Who the Holy Spirit is, who has the Holy Spirit, and what the gifts are. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. There is God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and

Things to Think About

1. How have you seen the church work together to do good?
2. What gifts do you see in the people you know? How do they use them?
3. If you are a Christian, do you know your gifts? What are they and how do you use them?
4. A person cannot be a good Christian without a church. Do you agree or not? Why or why not?
5. Make a list of all the gifts written in the five different places in the Bible. There may be others. List any more you can think of.

God as the Holy Spirit. These are not three Gods, but only one God. Hard to understand? Yes. God's three-in-one nature is a **mystery** because God is not like us. He is so different and so much greater that it is hard for our brains to understand.

Paul wanted us to understand that the Holy Spirit is the One Who makes it possible for Christians to believe and to talk about Jesus as Lord. This means all true Christians have the Holy Spirit. This was his answer to the question of gifts of the Holy Spirit. Christians in Paul's time had questions because the Holy Spirit gives so many different kinds of gifts. Is there one gift that can help us know which Christians have the Holy Spirit? That was the wrong question. Every Christian has a gift because they have the Holy Spirit, but no Christian has all the gifts. Also, there is not one gift that everyone gets.

The gifts are listed in this lesson's passage and also in 12:28, Romans 12:6-8, Ephesians 4:11, and 1 Peter 4:10-11. The lists are different, but they help us understand. We all have the same Holy Spirit, but we have very different gifts. All these gifts work together to make the church work well and meet all the needs, just like a body works well with many parts.

All One Body (12:12-14, 27-31)

Paul knew this was hard to understand so he explained it with a picture example. Think of a body. It has many different parts, and each part does something different. Each part looks different, but each part is important. When each part does what it was made to do, the body is healthy.

The body of Christ is made up of many different-looking

people who do many different things. Each has a different gift to use in the church. When everyone does their part, the church is healthy and does what it was made to do. Every person is important, and every gift is important. Each person must know and use their own gift for the body of Christ to do well and be united. They must not be **jealous** of others' gifts, but they should want the best gifts. The gifts that help others the most are the ones that are best for the body of Christ.

A Better Way (13:1-3)

There is a better way than bragging and **arguing** about gifts. Paul wrote about this problem: "I hear that when you meet together in the church you are divided into groups and you argue" (11:18). This is not the united church that the body of Christ should be. The better way is the most important lesson God teaches through the writings of Paul. It is the only way the gifts can be used. It is the greatest of all ways.

Love is the better way. Love is what brings all the gifts together for the shared good. Without love, the gifts do not help. Doing good feels good, but without love, what we say and do means nothing. Love holds the church together as a body.

Love is the reason Jesus became human and died on the cross for us. The Bible tells us: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever" (John 3:16). What is love? First Corinthians 13 tells us what love is, and 1 John 3:16 says: "We know what love is because Christ gave His life for us. We should give our lives for our brothers."

Are you a Christian? Do you have life that lasts forever? "If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved from the punishment of sin" (Romans 10:9). Believe and trust in Jesus, and know how much you are loved. Pray and ask God to forgive you for the wrong things you have done (sins). Give your life to Him, then you will have life that lasts forever. You will be a Christian. You will have the Holy Spirit and the gifts to love and help others.

Faith is believing, hope is trusting, and love is doing. The greatest of these is love!

1 Corinthians 12:1-14; 12:27 to 13:3

1 Christian brothers, I want you to know about the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You need to understand the truth about this.

2 You know that before you were Christians you were led to worship false gods. None of these gods could speak.

3 So I tell you that no one speaking by the help of the Holy Spirit can say that he hates Jesus. No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the help of the Holy Spirit.

4 There are different kinds of gifts. But it is the same Holy Spirit Who gives them.

5 There are different kinds of work to be done for Him. But the work is for the same Lord.

6 There are different ways of doing His work. But it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people.

7 The Holy Spirit works in each person in one way or another for the good of all.

8 One person is given the gift of teaching words of wisdom. Another person is given the gift of teaching what he has learned and knows. These gifts are by the same Holy Spirit.

9 One person receives the gift of faith. Another person receives the gifts of healing. These gifts are given by the same Holy Spirit.

10 One person is given the gift of doing powerful works. Another person is given the gift of speaking God's Word. Another person is given the gift of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and false spirits. Another person is given the gift of speaking in special sounds. Another person is given the gift of telling what these special sounds mean.

11 But it is the same Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, Who does all these things. He gives to each person as He wants to give.

12 Our own body has many parts. When all

these many parts are put together, they are only one body. The body of Christ is like this.

13 It is the same way with us. Jews or those who are not Jews, men who are owned by someone or men who are free to do what they want to do, have all been baptized into the one body by the same Holy Spirit. We have all received the one Spirit.

14 The body is not one part, but many parts.

27 You are all a part of the body of Christ.

28 God has chosen different ones in the church to do His work. First, there are missionaries. Second, there are preachers or those who speak for God. And third, there are teachers. He has also chosen those who do powerful works and those who have the gifts of healing. And He has chosen those who help others who are in need and those who are able to lead others in work and those who speak in special sounds.

29 Are they all missionaries? No. Are they all preachers or those who speak for God? No. Do they all do powerful works? No.

30 Do they all have the gifts of healing? No. Do they all speak in special sounds? No. Are they all able to tell what the special sounds mean? No.

31 But from your heart you should want the best gifts. Now I will show you even a better way.

13:1 may be able to speak the languages of men and even of angels, but if I do not have love, it will sound like noisy brass.

2 If I have the gift of speaking God's Word and if I understand all secrets, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I know all things and if I have the gift of faith so I can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

3 If I give everything I have to feed poor people and if I give my body to be burned, but do not have love, it will not help me.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

1 Corinthians 15:3-20,
35-44, 50-57

Memory Verse

“But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow.”

(1 Corinthians 15:20)

Word List

apostles: special followers of Jesus who were the first Christian leaders of the Church

disasters: terrible happenings on the earth that cause much damage and suffering

proof: anything that can be used to show that something is true

resurrection: being raised from the dead, coming back to new life

Have Hope in the Resurrection

In the last few years, so many **disasters** have happened — fires, floods, tornados, hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes. So many have died. Accidents and illness cause others to die daily. My sister died in May 2011 after a very short illness.

Is there hope for all these who die? Is death the end of life or is there more? What does the **resurrection** mean for them and for us? These are the questions the Christians were asking.

We Serve a Risen Savior (15:3-11)

Some of Christians thought they had the answer to these questions, but they were wrong. Paul provided the right answer more than once and in different ways to be very clear. He gave the Good News of Jesus Christ in just a few words: Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead. He gave **proof** so that no one could argue about it. The miracle of the resurrection happened, and eye witnesses could prove it. These were the people who had seen Jesus after He was raised from the dead: Peter, the 12 **apostles**, 500 followers, James (the brother of Jesus), and then Paul. The Corinthians could talk to these eye witnesses. There was no better proof.

The apostles were the special 11 followers of Jesus who traveled with Him. They chose one more follower who had been with Jesus to add up to 12 apostles. Jesus had been their teacher. Paul was the last person to see Jesus. That experience changed Paul from one who made trouble for believers to being a new apostle himself.

**Things to
Think About**

1. Do you believe in the resurrection of Jesus? Why or why not?
2. Do you believe in the resurrection of the dead? Why or why not?
3. If you have faith in Jesus, how do you know that it is not worth nothing? What proof do you have in your own life?
4. How would your life be different if Jesus had not been raised from the dead?
5. Do you know someone who has died in peace because of their faith? Tell their story.

Our Faith Is Not Worth Nothing (15:12-20)

What does the resurrection mean for all those who have died before us? Paul knew that some of the Corinthian Christians were teaching that people will not be raised from the dead. He had taught them that Christ had been raised, but they did not understand the full meaning of this. Paul explained that if people are not raised from the dead, then there is no resurrection of Christ. If there is no resurrection, then there is no hope, and faith in Christ is worth nothing. It is useless. That would make Christians the saddest of all people. Those who have died before us would be gone forever with no hope. We would have no hope.

Christ was the first to be raised from the dead. This means that Christians will also be resurrected on the last day when Jesus comes again. This truth means that there is hope. Faith in Jesus Christ is not worth nothing; it is worth everything! There is hope. One day, we will see those Christians who have died before us! What joy!

God-like Bodies (15:35-44)

When Christians are raised from the dead, what will their bodies be like? Paul gives a picture-answer. Think of a seed. A seed looks very different than the plant it will become. You put the seed in the ground, and it dies. Then it grows and becomes a new living plant. When God raises the bodies from the dead, they will not be the same as when they were put in the ground. They will be new bodies. The old bodies were broken, weak, and turn into dust. The new bodies will be great, strong, full of power, and will live forever. The old bodies were human. The new bodies will be God-like.

Another picture helps us to understand how different the new bodies will be. Paul talks about how many different kinds of animal bodies there are and how very different those are from the bodies in the heavens. (The heavens means the sky that we can see.) All these pictures help us to understand that the new bodies are going to be a miracle. We don't have to worry about what happens to the dead bodies because God will change the old bodies to new, very different bodies. God can do anything!

We Will All Be Changed (15:50-57)

Jesus is coming to raise the old bodies and give God-like bodies to all who believe. Those who are alive when Jesus comes back will also be changed. Human bodies cannot live in heaven, so they must be changed. Jesus had a God-like body after He was raised from the dead. He could eat, drink, and touch things. He could also do many things that are impossible for human bodies. It is interesting to study what Jesus did after the resurrection to see what the new bodies are like.

My mother-in-law knew she would be changed. After the doctors told her she

had cancer and would die soon, she had peace. She told us she knew that she was going to heaven. She knew that in heaven, she would not be sick. She died three weeks later. We miss her, but we know we will see her again.

Because of Jesus' resurrection, Christians have hope — and a wonderful future waiting for them.

1 Corinthians 15:3-20, 35-44, 50-57

3 First of all, I taught you what I had received. It was this: Christ died for our sins as the Holy Writings said He would. (Isaiah 53:5-12)

4 Christ was buried. He was raised from the dead three days later as the Holy Writings said He would. (Psalm 16:9-10)

5 Christ was seen by Peter. After that, the twelve followers saw Him.

6 After that, more than 500 of His followers saw Him at one time. Most of them are still here, but some have died.

7 After that, James saw Christ. Then all the missionaries saw Him.

8 Last of all, Christ showed Himself to me as if I had been born too late.

9 For I am the least important of all the missionaries. I should not be called a missionary because I made it so hard for God's church.

10 I am different now. It is all because of what God did for me by His loving-favor. His loving-favor was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other missionaries. But it was not I who worked. It was God's loving-favor working through me.

11 It makes no difference how you heard the Good News. It could have been through the other missionaries or through me. The

important thing is this: We preached the Good News to you and you believed it.

12 We preached to you that Christ has been raised from the dead. But some of you say that people are not raised from the dead. Why do you say this?

13 If the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised from the dead.

14 If Christ was not raised from the dead, then what we preach to you is worth nothing. Your faith in Christ is worth nothing.

15 That makes us all liars because we said that God raised Christ from the dead. But God did not raise Christ from the dead if the dead do not come to life again.

16 If the dead are not raised, then not even Christ was raised from the dead.

17 If Christ was not raised from the dead, your faith is worth nothing and you are still living in your sins.

18 Then the Christians who have already died are lost in sin.

19 If we have hope in Christ in this life only, we are more sad than anyone else.

20 But it is true! Christ has been raised from the dead! He was the first One to be raised from the dead and all those who are in graves will follow.

35 Someone will say, "How are the dead raised? What kind of bodies will they have?"

36 What a foolish question! When you plant a seed, it must die before it starts new life.

37 When you put it in the earth, you are not planting the body which it will become. You put in only a seed.

38 It is God Who gives it a body just as He wants it to have. Each kind of seed becomes a different kind of body.

39 All flesh is not the same. Men have one kind of flesh. Animals have another kind. Fish have another kind, and birds have another kind.

40 There are bodies in the heavens. There are bodies on earth. Their greatness is not the same.

41 The sun has its greatness. The moon has its greatness. Stars have their greatness. One star is

different from another star in greatness.

42 It is the same with people who are raised from the dead. The body will turn back to dust when it is put in a grave. When the body is raised from the grave, it will never die.

43 It has no greatness when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with shining-greatness. It is weak when it is put in a grave, but it is raised with power.

44 It is a human body when it dies, but it is a God-like body when it is raised from the dead. There are human bodies and there are God-like bodies.

50 Christian brothers, our bodies which are made of flesh and blood will not go into the holy nation of God. That which dies can have no part in that which will never die.

51 For sure, I am telling you a secret. We will not all die, but we will all be changed.

52 In a very short time, no longer than it takes for the eye to close and open, the Christians who have died will be raised. It will happen when the last horn sounds. The dead will be raised never to die again. Then the rest of us who are alive will be changed.

53 Our human bodies made from dust must be changed into a body that cannot be destroyed. Our human bodies that can die must be changed into bodies that will never die.

54 When this that can be destroyed has been changed into that which cannot be destroyed, and when this that does die has been changed into that which cannot die, then it will happen as the Holy Writings said it would happen. They said, "Death has no more power over life." (Isaiah 25:8)

55 O death, where is your power? O death, where are your pains?

56 The pain in death is sin. Sin has power over those under the Law.

57 But God is the One Who gives us power over sin through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks to Him for this.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

UNIT 2

Renewing the Relationship

Lesson 7

Use Your Troubles to Help
Others
(2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

Lesson 8

Heal Relationships
(2 Corinthians 1:12 to 2:13)

Lesson 9

Measure Ministry Rightly
(2 Corinthians 2:17 to 3:6;
4:1-6)

Lesson 10

Look at Life from Eternity
(2 Corinthians 4:7 to 5:10)

Lesson 11

Be Encouraged to Minister
(2 Corinthians 5:11 to 6:2)

Lesson 12

Become Great in Giving
(2 Corinthians 8:1-15;
9:7-8, 11-15)

Lesson 13

Depend on God's Grace
(2 Corinthians 12:1-10)

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Renewing the Relationship

Paul and Timothy wrote a second letter to the Corinthian believers because the problems in the church did not change much after the first letter. Paul heard that there were some good things happening, some things had changed, but so much more needed to change. False missionaries were saying bad things about Paul. Some believers were listening to these false missionaries and were also arguing against Paul. These concerns gave Paul and Timothy good reason to write again.

This is a letter about relationships. Paul wanted to renew or start over again to make a good relationship with the church members in Corinth. He was their father in Christ, and he loved them enough to encourage them to do better. He also wanted them to renew good relationships with each other. But the most important thing to Paul and Timothy was to make sure that the church in Corinth would renew and get a closer relationship with Jesus Christ. They gave advice to the believers about using their troubles to help others and how to heal broken relationships. They asked them to measure ministries rightly and to look at life with a focus on eternity. They encouraged these Christians—and Christians everywhere—to minister to each other and to the hurting world around them by giving generously. Lastly, Paul strongly encouraged them to depend on God's grace.

Relationships can be difficult, but it is important to make them the best that they can be. Let's find out how.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Memory Verse

“He gives us comfort in all our troubles. Then we can comfort other people who have the same troubles.”

(2 Corinthians 1:4)

Word List

greeting: polite or friendly words spoken to someone when you meet; words used in the first part of a letter

hymn: a song praising or honoring God

purpose: the reason or use for something

violent: showing strong feelings with actions that cause hurt and pain

Use Your Troubles to Help Others

In earlier lessons, I shared my experiences with my alcoholic father who became a believer and completely gave up drinking alcohol. I am happy to say that God now uses my troubles with my alcoholic father to help others. I have met many people whose lives were like mine. Some have helped me, and now I am helping others.

Chuck is one of those I am helping. Alcohol has been a problem in his family with his stepfather who also becomes **violent** when drunk. His story is different, though. God has helped Chuck by providing other places for him to live. His move to our area was part of that plan. My story and the miracle that God did in my father’s life gives comfort to Chuck. He prays that God can do the same for his family. It is wonderful to be able to tell him this and to give him hope. We don’t know how God will work, but we know God is able to do what seems impossible. God gives me a special understanding and love for those who have this same kind of trouble in their lives.

This is true for all who have trouble in their lives. As Paul explains here, God can and will use our troubles to help others—if we allow Him to.

Greetings (1:1-2)

Paul started this letter with his normal **greeting**. He told whom the letter was from: Paul, the chosen missionary. He told who was with him: Timothy, who was also writing. He told to

**Things to
Think About**

1. How does it help to share our stories of trouble and suffering with others?
2. Why did Paul want the Christians in Corinth to know about his sufferings?
3. Do you believe that God causes or allows suffering? Why?
4. How do troubles cause people to grow in faith?
5. Share a story of trouble or suffering that God brought you or a friend through. How did you grow or change in a good way?
6. What kind of strength does Paul tell about and what good came from his suffering?

whom he was writing: God’s people in Corinth and Greece.

Lastly, he gave them a blessing.

The Christians in Corinth and Greece knew Timothy well. He had traveled with Paul to Corinth on a missionary trip. He had traveled without Paul to Corinth to teach and help in the church. Now they were writing together, not only to the church in Corinth, but to God’s people all over the country of Greece.

We Are Not Alone (1:3-5)

Jesus told us, “In the world you will have much trouble. But take hope! I have power over the world!” (John 16:33). Everyone has trouble. There are all kinds of trouble in this world. God is our loving Father Who cares about us and our troubles. He gives us comfort. This comfort helps us, and then we can give the same comfort to others who have troubles.

This does not take away our troubles. But it helps us make it through our troubles, which makes us grow in our faith. We can tell others about God’s love. We can tell them how God provided for us in our troubles. We can and should give them the same comfort and hope that God gave us. This gives **purpose** to our times of trouble.

Paul began to tell about his troubles in this letter. He and those who traveled with him had suffered much. They had suffered for Christ. They had been comforted during their times of suffering and troubles. The suffering was like the pain which Christ suffered. He was the first to suffer. His suffering was great, and so His comfort for them and for us is great.

Now Paul and his traveling friends could share that great

comfort with the people of the church who were suffering. The troubles did not go away, but there was great comfort in knowing that they were not alone in their troubles. There was great comfort in knowing that God had brought others through the same kind of suffering.

We are not alone in whatever trouble we might have. God is with us, giving us comfort and hope. Others share their stories to help us. Then we share our stories to help those who suffer after us. This is how our loving Father provides for us in our times of trouble and suffering.

Bright Hope for Tomorrow (1:6-7)

An old **hymn** called *Great is Thy Faithfulness* has these words: “Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.” These words describe how God provides all that we need and how God helps in every way. What a great promise that gives great hope. This hope shines like a bright light during our dark times.

Paul saw that one of the purposes of his troubles was for the good of others. The comfort he could give them would help them to not give up. He had trouble because he brought the Good News of Jesus to them

and they were saved. He and Timothy were suffering for Christ. The people were also suffering for Christ. They shared the same kind of trouble and the same kind of comfort. God provided the same strength to help them not give up.

Trust in God (1:8-11)

Paul gave them an example to encourage them in their time of trouble. He told them about a trip to Asia where the suffering was so bad, they thought they would die. Their strength was gone. He did not say what caused such terrible suffering, but he did give its purpose.

Another purpose of trouble is to help us put our trust in God. When we can help ourselves, we brag about our own strength. We think we do not need God. When our strength is gone, we must put our trust in God alone. God, Who has the power to raise the dead, has the power to help us in all our trouble. It is a lesson that we all must learn. We need to learn to put our trust in God before our strength is gone. When trouble comes our way, we should pray first. Troubles cause us to pray. This is yet another purpose of hard times in our lives.

God has helped us in the past. God

helps us right now. God will help us in the future. This does not mean that bad things will never happen, but it does mean we can trust God to do what is best for us.

We pray for people who are in troubled times. We thank God for His comfort, help, and hope. Then we share all those things with others, along with the joy of answered prayer!

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.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 1:12
to 2:13

Memory Verse

“God is the One Who makes our faith and your faith strong in Christ.”

(2 Corinthians 1:21)

Word List

explain: to make clear or give the meaning of something

protect: to keep from harm or danger; to defend from anything that would hurt

punish: to make suffer pain or loss for doing something wrong, bad, or sinful, so that one will learn to do right

relationship: the way in which two or more people talk to, behave toward, or deal with each other

Heal Relationships

Relationships can be a most wonderful—and most difficult—part of our lives. My **relationship** with my father has been difficult. Because he was a violent alcoholic, I lived much of my young life in fear. I did not understand why he would throw furniture, yell, and try to hurt others. Later I learned the alcohol changed his thoughts and actions. I hated that alcohol. Why did he choose to drink it? Did he not care about us?

Everything changed when Dad became a Christian. I learned the problem was not alcohol; the problem was sin. But now he was a new person because he had given his life to Christ. I did not want to hurt or **punish** my dad for the trouble he caused us. But I wanted to **protect** him from going back to that life. Our relationship changed slowly. I prayed about the problems of the past. Others shared how God had healed their relationships with their alcoholic parent. I learned to forgive Dad. All these things were important to help heal my relationship with him.

There are many times in life when we have problems with relationships. What should we do about these problem relationships? Paul also had problem relationships with the church at Corinth. They also had problem relationships which Paul talked about in his other letters to them. Healing these troubled relationships is important, but how does it happen?

Proud? (1:12-14)

It is important to understand why we do what we do. Is it to make others believe things about us that are not true? Is it to

Things to Think About

1. Is pride good or bad? When is it right to be proud?
2. “Jesus says yes to all of God’s promises” (1:20) What does this mean? How has this been true in your life?
3. What can you do to stop from hurting those you love with your words?
4. How can forgiving someone help to heal the relationship and what else can it heal?
5. How was it helpful to the church in Corinth that Paul did not come but sent them a letter? Was that the right thing to do? Why or why not?

make ourselves look good? Some thought that was true about Paul, but he **explained** everything he did was honest and came from pure desires. He and Timothy depended completely on God.

They were proud of what God had done. Paul wrote about important things. He was very clear and wrote only what was true and possible to understand. Paul knew that those who were reading the letter might not understand how God works.

God’s power is not easy to understand, but it is important to try. We can pray and hope for more understanding. One day when Jesus comes back, we will understand everything perfectly. We will be proud of our brothers and sisters in Christ, and they will be proud of us. We will understand how God used each of us to make a difference in this dark world.

A Change in Travel Plans (1:15 to 2:4)

One problem in Paul’s relationship with the Corinthians was because he changed his travel plans. He told them he would be coming, but then decided to send a letter instead. He (using *I*, not *we*) explains that this does not mean he should not be trusted like people of the world who say what they do not mean.

Then he gave some reasons why he can be trusted. He can be trusted because he trusts and follows God. God always keeps His word. Paul can be trusted because he belongs to Jesus. Jesus can be trusted. Jesus talked about saying *yes* and *no* in Matthew 5:37: “Let your yes be YES. Let your no be NO. Anything more than this comes from the devil.”

Do what you promise to do, but remember to follow God in everything, even if that means a change in plans.

Next, Paul explained why he changed his mind. First, he did not want to hurt them with his strong words. Second, he did not want to make them or himself sad with a bad visit. Third, he wanted to explain the problems in a letter where he could also tell them how much he loved them.

We can learn from Paul's example. We do need people to trust us, but we also need to listen to what God says is best. It is important to change *our* plans if they are not *His* plans. It is best not to talk while we are angry. We need to think carefully about the words we use so we do not hurt those we love. When we make our loved ones sad, we also make ourselves sad. Waiting to speak or write could be the answer. God's Spirit helps us know what is best.

Forgiving (2:5-11)

When Christian brothers and sisters sin, it hurts everyone in the church. Paul was kind to not say who this person was or what he had done. Everyone knew, and everyone was hurt by it. Paul did say that his punishment was enough. It was time to forgive and comfort this man. Forgive and heal the relationship. This is love—that we forgive, protect, and encourage each other

toward right living. This is the most important part of healing a relationship.

If we do not forgive, a person may stop trying to change and will go back to his/her sin. Satan would win. It is important to punish when needed, but it is very important to forgive soon. This is how we protect each other from the works of Satan.

Worried for Titus (2:12-13)

Paul showed his love and forgiveness for the church in Corinth by what he did. He explained to them that he was going to preach in Troas, but he was worried about Titus. Titus was going to give him a report about the church in Corinth and how they felt about his letter. Titus was not there, and Paul's love for him and for the church caused him to leave right away.

We need to not only forgive but to really love. "Be sure your love is true love" (Romans 12:9). As Paul's example shows us, our love for others pushes us to forgive and heal relationships so we may grow together in our love for God.

2 Corinthians 1:12 to 2:13

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!

12 When I arrived in the city of Troas, the Lord opened the door for me to preach the Good News of Christ.

13 I was worried because I could not find our brother Titus. After saying good-bye, I went on my way to the country of Macedonia.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 2:17
to 3:6; 4:1-6

Memory Verse

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

(2 Corinthians 3:5)

Word List

generous: willing to give or share well, not selfish or greedy

greedy: wanting or taking all that one can get with no thought of what others need or want

measure: to learn the facts about something by comparing it to something else; here, ministry is compared to Christian ideas from Jesus

ministry: what a preacher or person serving Jesus does to help others and tell the Good News about Jesus

Measure Ministry Rightly

Most Christian pastors are good and teach the truth.

Sometimes, however, a pastor may just **pretend** to be Christian or pretend to be good. This kind of person wants to get as much money as possible from people. They may become very rich from other people’s money. You can see some of these on television today. Not all pastors who preach and teach on television are false, though some are. One way to know they are false is when they are **greedy** instead of **generous**. They are very proud of their work and themselves.

Good pastors are a blessing to their people. Chuck went to a friend’s church where he had visited before. The pastor of this church was generous and obeyed God. He told Chuck that he knew God wanted Chuck to move to Dallas so he gave him the money he needed. Chuck did not ask for it. This was just one of the ways God provided for him. The people of that church could tell many stories of how their pastor was a blessing to them.

How do we know if a pastor or ministry is true or false?

What should we see or not see? What should we hear or not hear?

How should we **measure** a **ministry**?

People Sent from God (2:17 to 3:6)

Paul and Timothy were a blessing to the church of Corinth.

They did not preach to make money. They told the truth. They knew they spoke God’s Word in Jesus’ power, not their own.

They did not brag about what they had done. They did not need letters from many people saying how great they were. The people

pretend: to talk or act in a false way

Things to Think About

1. Does your church talk and act like they want people to know Jesus Christ? How do you know?
2. What has happened because of your ministry or the ministry of your pastor or church?
3. How do you know if a ministry is true or false?
4. What does a good and true ministry look like? How do others feel when they are part of it?
5. What is the best ministry you have seen or been a part of?
6. What could happen if you did not measure a ministry rightly?

in that church knew what true and honest men Paul and Timothy were. They could tell how God had used these men. Others who came to that church could see the truth about their ministry by watching the people there. They could see changed lives.

Paul and Timothy were generous in their love and care for the people: “You are written in our hearts.” They were generous in sharing their faith. They were generous with the truth of Who has the power and life. They were generous in their service to the people. The changed lives of the people proved they were telling the truth. Love and changed lives are good measures of ministry.

A Plain and Honest Ministry (4:1-6)

The ministry of Paul and Timothy was plain and honest. They would not give up. They would not give anyone any reason to be ashamed of them. They would not say false things about the Word of God. They did not preach about themselves. These are the measures of an honest ministry.

They used plain and clear words to preach the truth. They preached the Good News in easy-to-understand words. They clearly preached Christ Jesus as Lord. Their message was available to all who would listen. These are the measures of a plain and clear ministry.

Paul gave seven measurements of ministry that we can use. Some have been given, but will be given as questions to ask. The answers to these questions will help us to measure a ministry and those who preach.

First question: *Are they people of truth sent by God (2:17)?* God’s Word is truth and must not be changed. Any ministry that

changes the truth or brags that they have the power to change people must be measured as false. Any ministry that preaches God's Word with Christ's power must be measured as true.

Second question: *Are they helping people be more like Christ (3:1-3)?* Christ is the most important example for all to follow. We can measure a ministry or a preacher by how they follow Christ in their love for the people. We can also measure the way the people follow Christ by the power of the Spirit in their lives.

Third question: *Do they depend on God in all their work (3:5)?* It is God who gives the power and makes ministry possible. Those who depend on themselves are false. Those who depend on God and thank and praise Him for all His good work are true.

Fourth question: *Do they focus on the Holy Spirit that gives life, not the Law that brings death (3:6)?* The ministry or preacher should help people understand that it is the Holy Spirit that gives us life and not the good we do by ourselves. We do want to live morally, but we can only do this in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth question: *Are they honest and do they show who they really are (4:1-2)?*

This is sometimes difficult to know, especially if they are good at pretending. If they are immoral, the truth will show in time. We can pray and ask God to show us the truth.

Sixth question: *Do they tell everyone at all times that Jesus Christ is Lord (4:5)?*

If the preacher or the ministry focuses on Jesus, then they can be measured as true. If they brag or preach about themselves, they can be measured as false. This is the most important question and proof.

Seventh question: *Are they servants of others because of Jesus (4:5)?* If they only talk about how good they are and do not serve others, they must be measured as false. They must serve others with the love of Jesus. They must not be greedy, but be generous in their time, work, service, and with money.

It is important to measure a ministry rightly. God wants us to know the truth about ministries. Paul and Timothy were true preachers. How about others?

2 Corinthians 2:17 to 3:6; 4:1-6

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.

4:1 Through God's loving-kindness, He has given us this job to do. So we do not give up.

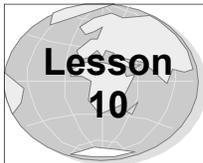
2 We have put away all things that are done in secret and in shame. We do not play with the Word of God or use it in a false way. Because we are telling the truth, we want men's hearts to listen to us. God knows our desires.

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.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 4:7
to 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

eternal: lasting
forever; without an
end

eternity: the time
after death that has no
end

fix: to make right
again, make whole or
like new again

modern: having to do
with the present time
we live in; changed or
different from older
times

Look at Life from Eternity

In the 1700s, a young shoemaker was good at cursing and lying. He tried stealing, but he was caught. A little later on, he became a Christian. Then he, like Paul, found that the troubles in this life were nothing compared with the good that waits for us in **eternity**.

This young man went from shoemaker to preacher, missionary, language worker, and teacher. In his life, he was the first of many missionaries to go out. He translated the Bible into 40 languages. He spent his life preaching to the people in India and starting schools there.

He also had much trouble. His wife, Dorothy, died, as well as his son, Peter. Years later, his second wife, Charlotte, died. People said bad things about him. Through much of his life, he was in danger. He was often lonely and sometimes terribly sad. He was often poor. His name was William Carey, and he is known as the father of **modern** missions.

How did William Carey find courage in his life? What should we do when we have trouble in this life? What helps us when a loved one dies? What will eternity be like?

The Work of Death (4:7-15)

Christians do not have an easy life. God did not promise we would not have troubles. But He did promise to be with us in our troubles. The “light” that is in each Christian is Jesus, the Light of the world (John 8:12). He is both *in* us and *with* us. He is there when we have troubles and helps us through those troubles.

**Things to
Think About**

1. What in your life causes you to feel like Paul, that life is very difficult? What advice would Paul give you about that?
2. What does faith help us to know? (see 4:13-14)
3. How does seeing things from eternity change how you think and live?
4. How can you please Jesus in this life?
5. What kind of pay will you get when you stand before Jesus for the good you have done?
6. How does a person know they are going to go to heaven when they die?

They are difficult but not impossible with His power. Paul explains with four examples of how it is difficult but possible.

Paul writes of a mystery of opposites. We read both death and life in each of the verses 10-12. The death he talks about is the death of the body. The life he describes is **eternal** life which begins in our human bodies and then in our new bodies after the resurrection. Like Jesus, we suffer in this body. Also like Jesus, we have life that lasts forever.

Paul and his Christian brothers and sisters were daily in danger of dying because of their belief in Jesus. But others could also see Jesus' life in them, and it caused them to believe in Jesus. In this way, the work of death becomes the work of life as many believe and begin living a new and eternal life.

The resurrection is the hope of all Christians. We can see life in a very different way because we know that death is not the end. This is Paul's focus. Because we believe, we tell others. Because God raised Jesus from the dead, we have faith that we will also be raised from the dead. Because we and others believe, we can all give thanks to God. God is good. God is great!

Focusing on Eternity (4:16-18)

Because of this focus on eternity and the hope of the resurrection, there is no reason to give up. It is true that our bodies wear out. We are dying every day. Age, disease, and trouble make our bodies weaker and give us more pain. But this is not true for our spirits. As Christians, our spirits are getting stronger every day. They are being made new.

Not long ago, my husband and I hired some workers to **fix**

the inside of our house. Many things inside were very old. We wanted it to look new and modern. The workers came and brought a big truck. They started bringing out the old things that were not good anymore and putting them in the truck. The outside of our house started looking bad. But the inside started looking good as new things were brought in. Walls were fixed and painted.

This is a great picture of our body and spirit. While the outside is getting worse, the inside is getting better.

When we remember that we have eternity for our future, it is easier to see our troubles and pain as less important. Our troubles are for just a short time. Yes, we suffer here, but our suffering is nothing compared to how great our lives will be with God in eternity. These bodies and the things we see now will end one day. But the things we cannot see will last forever. Life has a new meaning when we focus on eternity.

The Work of Resurrection (5:1-10)

Paul and Timothy now use the picture of a house to talk about the body. The body we have now is like a house

because it will not last forever. Like every house, it will be destroyed. Then we will get a new body that is not like this one, because it will be eternal. It is called our resurrection body. It is the body we will have in heaven.

We want this new body now because in our new body, we will not suffer. Our spirit and our new body will be together in heaven. Although some think when we die, we are only spirits, Paul teaches that we will always have a body. It is a mystery about death and the resurrection of the body that will happen in the future. It is a blessing to know how wonderful our new bodies will be. It is a blessing to have His Spirit to make us ready and sure while we wait for this change. This is our proof.

Do we want to die now? No, but because of the suffering and pain, we would like to have our new bodies now. The work of the resurrection is the work of change from the old to the new. We live by faith, not by what we see.

We are sure that when we do die, we will be away from our old bodies and with our Lord Jesus. This is what eternity is like. This is what gives us courage in life. This is

what gives us comfort when a loved one dies. This is how we see life from eternity.

2 Corinthians 4:7 to 5:10

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.

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. He will be paid for the good or the bad done while he lived in this body.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 5:11
to 6:2

Memory Verse

“All this comes from God. ...He did this through Christ. Then He gave us the work of bringing others to Him.”

(2 Corinthians 5:18)

Word List

healthy: doing something that keeps one well in body and mind and does not make one sick

urgency: the need for quick action; to do it now or perhaps something bad will happen

victims: those who are hurt or killed or the family of those hurt or killed because of crimes or disasters

Be Encouraged to Minister

My husband, Doug, is a minister. He ministers to **victims**. He serves them and tells them about hope in Jesus. Chuck is a minister. He serves in ministries at his church. He tells visitors about classes where they can learn about Jesus. Bonnie, John, Phil, and Sonia are all ministers. They teach English at their church. They tell their students how much Jesus loves them, and they pray for them.

None of these people are pastors or preachers, but they are all ministers. They are not paid to do the work they do. This is their ministry to others. God has given them the work of bringing others to Him.

God has given all Christians the work of bringing others to Him. How do we know what work God has given us? What reasons do we have to do this work?

Four reasons are given in this part of the letter to the Christians in Corinth: The fear of the Lord, the love of Christ, being a new person in Christ, and the **urgency** of time.

The Fear of the Lord (5:11-13)

Fear is an interesting word. People have a fear of many things like spiders and snakes. We feel fear when something bad happens. First John 4:18 says: “There is no fear in love. Perfect love puts fear out of our hearts.” This kind of fear is not good. God’s love helps take away this kind of fear.

There is another kind of fear. This kind of fear is good. It is a **healthy** kind of fear. We fear burning ourselves—so we do

**Things to
Think About**

1. What fears do you have? Are these healthy or unhealthy fears?
2. Do you have a healthy fear of God? Why or why not?
3. Has your relationship with God been healed? How did that happen?
4. Are you a new person in Christ? If so, what changes have you seen? Do others see those changes in you?
5. How are you a missionary of Christ?
6. Which reason makes you want to bring others to God the most?

not put our hand in a fire. We fear getting hurt—so we do not jump out of a moving car. We fear failing a test—so we study hard. This kind of fear gives us reasons to do something or not do something.

Paul tells us we know the fear of God because He is our Judge: “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. He will be paid for the good or the bad done while he lived in this body” (2 Cor. 5:10). This gives us our reason to serve Christ. This gives us our reason to tell all about Christ because they will also be judged. It gives us our reason to try to get people to put their trust in Christ. God knows why we do what we do. As Christians, we should do the work of bringing others to Jesus because we have a healthy fear of God.

Paul hoped his brothers and sisters in Christ understood his reasons. He wanted to be a good example that they could talk about to the world. This would help them tell others about Christ. The world cares about how people look, not how they are in their hearts. But God looks at the heart.

Paul was not crazy, as some were saying. Paul was using his mind to serve others. The fear of God in Paul and Timothy gave the Corinthian believers another reason to do God’s work.

The Love of Christ (5:14-15)

The second and stronger reason to do the work of God is because of the love of Christ. We want to serve Him because we are sure that God loves everyone. Christ died for everyone. He died because we are sinners. Because of this, we have a part in

His death. He died so we could live for Him. He is our Savior!

He was raised from the dead for everyone. His resurrection gives us a reason to live to please Him, not ourselves. It gives us great love for others. “We know what love is because Christ gave His life for us. We should give our lives for our brothers” (1 John 3:16).

What Good News we have to share with everyone! Ministering with love is an important part of what it means to follow Jesus and live for Him.

Being a New Person in Christ (5:16-21)

The third reason we minister is because Christ has made each Christian a new person. We are being changed by God for a purpose. The purpose is to bring others to God. For them, the old is gone, and they begin a new life, too. The relationship is healed between God and people.

Being made a new person changes the way we see people. As Christians, we first had to see Christ differently when we realized He was God’s Son. Now, we see people differently. What people look like is not important. What people have or don’t

have is not important. We see them the way God sees them—with love. We see other Christians as being made new, too.

My children had “Show and Tell” when they were in elementary school. They would bring something that was important to them to school. They would show it to the class and tell them all about it and why it was so important to them.

This is what God asks us to do. He wants us to “show and tell” all people Who He is and how important He is in our lives. He does not hold our sins against us and wants to bring the whole world back to Himself. We are His missionaries, speaking for Him. Being a new person in Christ is all this and more. It is a great reason to minister to those who need to come to God.

The Urgency of Time (6:1-2)

The fourth reason given for working for God is that the time is short. There is so much to do and so little time. That may sound funny since it has been 2,000 years since Christ lived, but each day is important. People are dying every day who have never heard of Christ. This should make us very sad. This should give us a feeling of urgency. This should give us a

great reason to go out and do the work God has given us to do.

We must work together to do what needs to be done. We must not waste time on unimportant things and leave the important things undone. The time to come to God is right now. Today is the day to be saved from the punishment of sin. If you haven't, do it now. Then go, show and tell Jesus to the world!

2 Corinthians 5:11 to 6:2

11 Because of this, we know the 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.

6:1 We are working together with God. We ask you from our hearts not to receive God's lovingfavor 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)



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

2 Corinthians 8:1-15;
9:7-8, 11-15

Memory Verse

“God loves a man
who gives because he
wants to give.”
(2 Corinthians 9:7)

Word List

attitude: a feeling or
way of thinking that
affects one’s actions

faithful: having or
showing true and
constant support or
loyalty; keeping
promises or doing
what you are
supposed to do

grace: loving-favor of
God; help or kindness
that God gives or
shows to people

improve: to make or
become better

privilege: a special
right or favor given to
a person or group

Become Great in Giving

As the family of Christ, the church has people with many gifts from the Holy Spirit. One of those gifts is the gift of giving. Earlier, I described how the church gave to Chuck and provided everything he needed in a short period of time. Did all of those people have the special gift of giving? Maybe not. Giving is also an act of **grace** and one of the ways that we worship God. We worship God by singing, praying, and giving each time we meet for church services. All Christians are to be **faithful** givers who give with the right **attitude**.

Giving Is an Act of Grace (8:1-9)

God is a giver. God gave the gift of His Son, Jesus. God gave us the gift of His plan to save us, the Good News. God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit. He gave us the church. Each of these gifts is a proof of God’s grace toward us. We are more like God when we show love through giving. Giving is a wonderful **privilege**.

Paul gave two examples of giving: The example of the Macedonians and the example of Christ Himself. The churches of Macedonia were the churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. They gave even in their time of trouble. They wanted to help, and they asked for the privilege of giving. They saw it as a privilege to be used by God in this way.

Often, we do not help others when we are having troubles. We think about our own needs because we have to, but we go too far. We think of our own needs and stop thinking of the needs of others. Paul reminded the Corinthians, a **wealthy** church, that the

wealthy: very rich, having a lot of money

Things to Think About

1. How is giving an act of grace?
2. Are you faithful in giving to the Lord. Why or why not?
3. Do you have trouble thinking about the needs of others more than of your own? If so, what could you do to change that?
4. Who do you know that gives faithfully and with a good attitude? How do they show this? Do you have a story about it?
5. Do you give with the right attitude? Which is the most difficult for you, giving generously, lovingly, or thankfully? Why?

Macedonian churches did not stop thinking of others when they were suffering. They chose to give from what they had to help others.

In these times of trouble with money, we must not forget that there are others in need. Let us give even if we are suffering, even if we are going through trouble ourselves.

The Macedonians were also very poor, yet they gave. They were generous in their giving. We give reasons why we are not able to give, but are we really as poor as they were? Many of us can make a list of the many things we choose to buy for ourselves instead of doing our part in God's grace of giving. The Macedonians gave as much as they could. The only thing they had a lot of was joy. So many people today are the opposite. They have so many things, but they have so little real joy.

The Corinthians had so many other gifts. Paul said they were rich in these many gifts. But giving was not one of them. They needed to **improve** in the Christian grace of giving. We may think that if we are doing well in using our many gifts, we don't have to worry about this one. Even if we are strong in other areas of faith, we need to grow strong in this area, too.

The second example of giving as an act of grace is Christ. Jesus was rich but gave that up and became poor for us. He showed us how to live out the act of grace. He loved us so much that He gave His life for us. We must follow Him by giving what He has given us to those who are in need. In this way, we show God's love to them. We share His love when we share what we have with other people, all of whom are loved by Him. Jesus is our example of love and of giving.

Be Faithful in Giving (8:10-15)

Faithful giving means finishing this act of grace once you have started it.

Faithful giving means giving every time God provides enough for you to share. In Mark 12:41-44, Jesus saw a poor widow put in two small coins and told His followers that she gave more than any of the wealthy people. Why? Because she gave everything she had. She was a faithful giver.

The Corinthian church was the first to be willing to give but not the first to finish its giving. They had not finished getting the money together and had yet sent anything. It is good for Christians to be willing to give to the Lord, but then we must be faithful enough to do it. How much more could be done in mission work and helping those in need if every Christian in the church was a faithful giver?

Faithful giving also means giving wisely from what God has given you. Everything we have was given to us by God. God does not want to us to give more than we have. We know that God will provide for us and for others. God often provides through the generous gifts of our

brothers and sisters in Christ. So we give to others in their time of need and also receive with grace when we are in need. In Paul's words, we should "share alike."

Give with the Right Attitude (9:7-8, 11-15)

We can give in a wrong way or in a right way. Paul does not say that *how much* we give is important, but the *reason* we give is important. Paul told about two wrong attitudes and three right attitudes. The two wrong ones are giving if you really want to keep it and giving because you feel you have to. If you think about all the things you could buy if you did not give or if you think you will be punished if you don't give, those are the wrong reasons.

The right attitudes are to give because you want to and to give generously, lovingly, and thankfully. We give in this way because we know we are giving to an important purpose, the work of God. We give with these attitudes because our focus is the things of God, not of the world. We are happy to give well, showing God's love and being thankful for all that God has given us. Let's all become great in giving!

2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:7-8, 11-15

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 Now do it with the same strong desires you had 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)

9:7 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.

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 12:1-10

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 12:9)

Word List

amazed: feeling or showing great surprise, especially when something seems impossible or not normal or not likely to happen

depends: to put one's trust in and look to for help

disability: not being able to do something in the normal way because a part of the body does not work correctly

Depend on God's Grace

Chuck **depends** on God for everything now. Chuck was not always mostly blind. He was born with perfect sight in both eyes. Then, at the beginning of his ninth grade year in school, everything changed. He went to bed able to see and woke up mostly blind. No one could say why this happened. The doctors did a lot of tests but could not give any answers. Everyone was **amazed** at Chuck's attitude about this new **disability**. He was sure that God had a purpose in allowing this to happen to him.

Chuck had learned about God at an early age and had made a decision to follow him when he was in the fourth grade. He had depended on God in the good times. He had learned to depend on God through some difficult family times. Now he found that God's perfect grace was all he needed to make it through one of most difficult things that could happen to anyone. He trusted God, and God provided for his every need.

We can all learn to depend more on God from people with disabilities like Chuck. This is the hidden blessing of troubles and suffering.

Depend on God's Grace in Times of Blessing (12:1-6)

Paul had to depend on God. God had changed him from a person who was hurting and killing Christians to become a missionary who was telling the Good News of Jesus Christ and helping people become Christians.

Acts 9 tells his amazing story. Jesus came and spoke to Saul (his old name). He told him to stop working so hard against

Things to Think About

1. Chuck is an example of someone who must depend on other people and has learned to depend on God. Who do you know that has learned to depend on God in their troubles?
2. When you do good things and it works well, do you talk too proudly about it—or do you see how God gave it to you as a blessing?
3. What privileges or blessings has God given you? Are you faithful in serving Him?
4. What troubles, pains, or sufferings would you like God to take away? Can you think of a way that God can use them for good?
5. Can you look back and see how God's grace helped you through difficult times?
6. How are you weak?

Him. Suddenly Saul was blind. He had to depend on others to take him into the city. He was blind for three days. In a dream, God told a man named Ananias to go to Saul. God said to go and heal Saul's sight and tell him that God had special work for him to do. God told Ananias that He had chosen Saul to be a missionary to the Jews and to those who were not Jews.

Saul had also seen Ananias in a dream and knew that he was coming to heal him (Acts 9:12). This was the first time he had a special dream from God, but not the last. He began preaching right away after God changed his heart. His whole life changed, and He wanted to tell everyone about Jesus. Later, Saul changed his name to Paul.

Now some Christians and false missionaries were saying that Paul was not a real apostle. Jesus had come to him and talked to him. Jesus had chosen him to do His work. This was enough to make him a real apostle. He wanted everyone to know that he was a real apostle, so he gave them more proof. He told them that the Lord had shown him some things in a special dream. He did not want to talk too proudly about it, so he told it like a story. He told about a man who was just like him. He was taken in some way to heaven. The things he saw and heard there were so amazing he could not find the words to explain it.

This was a privilege and a special blessing from God to Paul. He could have been too proud about this blessing, but he wanted others to know that this actually helped him to see how weak he was. He did not want anyone to see him as better than he was because of it. It was a proof of telling the truth about himself as an apostle. It was an act of God's grace to him.

Depend on God's Grace in Times of Suffering (12:7-8)

Earlier, Paul had told about suffering many things for Christ. Now he told about a different kind of suffering. Satan had sent trouble in his body to hurt him. It may have been to hurt him, but God used it for a better purpose. God used it to stop him from being too proud. Paul did not want this trouble and asked God to take it away three times.

Some have tried to guess what Paul's trouble was. He said it was in his body. We know he had been beaten and hurt many times. Maybe he had pain that would not go away. Others have guessed that he was going blind because of what he wrote in Galatians 6:11, "See what big letters I make when I write to you with my own hand."

Paul did not explain what kind of trouble he had. But we do not need to know, because it helps us to see any trouble we have as something like Paul had. We can learn that God gives us blessings but also allows suffering. We can learn that we may not always know the full purpose for suffering, but we can know God's grace in the suffering. We are not alone.

Depending on God's Perfect Grace Is All We Need (12:9-10)

God did not take away the suffering, but He did give Paul an answer. This is the same answer we can know for ourselves: God is all we need! He gives us His grace. His power works best in weak people. Along with Paul, we can say we are happy to be weak and to have troubles so we can have Christ's power in us. With this power, when we are weak, then we are strong. Being weak causes us to depend on God. Now we can experience real joy.

Many people today want us to believe that God only gives us blessings. They want us to believe that only those blessings give us joy. If that were true, we would learn to be greedy. Jesus told us that in this world, we would have much trouble (John 16:33). Paul is the proof of this. Because of suffering and trouble, we learn to depend on God. We learn to have joy in His grace.

God knows what is best for us, so He gives blessings and allows troubles. He teaches us to depend on Him in the good times and the bad. He uses all things for good (see Romans 8:28). God is good!

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

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.

Romans 8:28

28 We know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him and are chosen to be a part of His plan.