

# 2 Corinthians

## NOTES

### **Day 1: Overview**

For today, in preparation to read 2 Corinthians, read Acts 19:1-41. The events recorded here in Acts occurred while Paul was in Ephesus, writing the first letter that we have to the church in Corinth.

Read Acts 20:1-2. These events were occurring while Paul sent Titus ahead with the letter to the Corinthians and Paul took the longer, over land route to get to Corinth.

Read Acts 20:2-3. The visit that Paul promises to make to Corinth is mentioned here in Acts, and when Paul leaves Corinth this time, he has the collection for Jerusalem that he references in this letter.

Spend some time in prayer today preparing for studying 2 Corinthians. Ask God to help prepare your heart to learn more about Him and what He expects of His people in His word as you study this book, and ask Him to help you to dig into this book and not just to allow yourself to be spoon fed. Ask Him to help make His word come alive to you as we go through this study.

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## Lesson 1: Enter In To Suffering

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Okay, this first question is really for you to see how the first century writers viewed each other's writings at that time. Read 2 Peter 3:14-16. How does Peter reference what Paul has written?

In verse 16, Peter directly compares Paul's writings to Scripture. How does he reference those writings?

What does that tell you about how the early church viewed these writings?

Why should that impact how YOU view these writings?

Read 1 Peter 1:3-9. What promises do you see for believers in these verses?

What encouragement does Peter give?

How does Peter describe the trials of believers? W

hat is their purpose/why must they occur? How long will they last?

What hope does Paul give here?

Read Philippians 1:12-14. Is Paul a stranger to suffering?

Does Paul lament his suffering?

What benefit does Paul share that has come from his imprisonment?

Read Matthew 10:16-25. What kind of a picture does Jesus paint here?

What does He *clearly* tell His followers they should expect?

Still, our goal should be to be like who?

What comfort can we find here?

Read Matthew 10:26-28. After Jesus has given His followers this sober warning, what does he tell them they should *not* fear?

What does He tell them they *should* fear? Who is it that actually has the power/authority to do this?

Read Romans 8:12-17. What are we called to live by?

What spirit did we *not* receive?

What spirit have we received?

The Spirit bears witness to this relationship with what provision?

Again, what encouragement can we find here?

Read Colossians 1:24-29. What does Paul rejoice in? Does Paul think he is adding to Christ's work on the cross through his own suffering?

How do you know this? (Hint: check the context immediately before this section in Colossians.)

Why does Paul continue to toil the way he does?

Read Hebrews 12:1-3. The writer of Hebrews encourages the reader to set aside anything that holds them back, including killing their sin so they can do what?

What example are we given?

What was Jesus' attitude as He went to the cross?

Where is He now? (Note: Jesus "sitting" is a sign that His work is complete. The payment was made, sin was dealt with, the payment accepted, and He is now seated as that work is complete.)

As you spend time with God today, consider ways in which you can enter in to the suffering of other believers, and ways in which others can enter in to your suffering. Prayer is always an amazing option, but what practical ways can you enter in or invite others to enter in with you?

Can you sit with someone while they wait for a loved one in the hospital? Bring coffee to that new mom with twins? Watch a baby for an hour so a mom can get a nap? Clean a bathroom? Do some laundry? Wash some dishes? We don't have to think "big" in order to enter in to the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Christ; often, the little things we can do are just as important when we show love to them by walking with them through their trials.

And, ask God to prepare your heart for the suffering and trials you are and will face. Ask Him to help you to hold on to these verses when you *do* face trials of all kinds, keeping those trials in perspective and ask Him to help you to suffer well, for His sake.

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## Lesson 2: Sinful Pride and Righteous Humility

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. Throughout this passage, where do we see that the wisdom of believers comes from?

Why is this a big deal?

How does that impact Paul's teaching in Corinth, both in person and through his letters?

Does this leave room for the person to boast in themselves?

Read Matthew 5:33-37. What caution does Jesus give here regarding making plans and making promises?

What should we be careful about doing or not doing?

Read Romans 1:16-17. Knowing that one accusation against Paul appears to have been the authenticity of the Gospel he preached, how does this passage show us what Paul's focus was, not just in Corinth, but everywhere he went?

Why would this matter?

Read Ephesians 1:11-14. What have we been given in Christ? Why?

What role do we see the Holy Spirit plays here?

Why should this encourage us as believers?

Read Romans 10:6-13. What does the righteousness based on faith proclaim?

What must we do to be saved?

How are people saved?

Is this salvation only for specific groups of people?

What hope does that give us?

What confidence should that give us as well?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8. What does Paul urge the people in Corinth to "suffer" to bring glory to God? We see, in 2 Corinthians, that Paul is willing to endure much slander and mistreatment

without retaliating in kind against these people. How does this passage in 1 Corinthians help us to understand where Paul was coming from as he didn't seek retribution?

How might we see this applied within the body of Christ today?

Over and over in Paul's writings, we see his teaching is consistent and Gospel and Christ centered. The people of Corinth were led astray so easily by false teachers and were so quick to reject Paul *and* his teaching. Where do we see this happening today?

Knowing that there is only *one* true Gospel, what should we be watchful of?

As you spend time with God today, ask Him to help you to see where you might be tempted to follow a teacher instead of following Scripture. Ask Him to help you to see where you may have elevated a person to an inappropriate place, allowing yourself to be swayed by them instead of going to Scripture to verify everything you are taught.

No matter who the teacher is, there is only *one* source of truth, and that is God's word. Make sure that you know His Word for yourself, and always check to be sure that what you are being taught is in line with Scripture.

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## Lesson 3: Be Reconciled Already

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Read Matthew 18:15-20. What is the goal of the rebuke of the brother in Christ? What is the first step to take? Why would you need to go on to the second step? What *is* the second step? Why would you need to go on to the third step? What *is* the third step? Why would you need to go on to the fourth step? What *is* the fourth step? Knowing what the goal is, keeping that in mind all the time, when should you “undo” the fourth step? Can just one person decide to “undo” this step? How should it be done, according to verses 18 -20?

Read Matthew 18:21-35. What do we see in this parable? Who shows the forgiveness that *you* would want to receive? *Is* that how *you* forgive others? Knowing that we are called to forgive from the heart, how are you doing at forgiving others in the way *you* would want to be forgiven? Why do you think this conversation happened immediately after Jesus had explained how to practice church discipline? How are they connected?

Read 1 Peter 2:1-11. What does Peter call all believers to put away? What should believers long for and crave? What are we being built up into? What contrasts do we see here, from the “past” to the “present” state of the believer? What does Peter warn believers to be careful to do?

Read Galatians 6:1-5. How does Paul encourage believers to restore those who are caught in sin? What caution does Paul give here? How should we show care for our brothers and sisters in Christ? Should we be looking at others to determine how well *we* are doing in bearing the load we have been given by God?

As you spend time with God today, is there anyone you are withholding forgiveness from, whether *they* know it or not? What, according to Scripture, should you do to resolve that? Ask God to help you to forgive, from the heart, with a right attitude, not out of compulsion, but out of a desire to please God and be reconciled (if possible) with your brother/sister. (Note: Reconciliation and forgiveness *are* two different things. It may not be wise to reconcile with everyone, especially in abusive situations. But if they are truly your brother or sister in Christ and they have sinned against you, consider these passages today and what God might be placing on your heart today to seek to forgive others.) May our goal always be to restore others to right relationship to Christ and to the body, not to “be right” or “make them pay” for the wrong they have done.

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## Lesson 4: What Is That Smell?

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. What is the point that Paul is making here? What does this help us understand about those who do not believe the Gospel? What encouragement does that give to those who *do* believe the Gospel? Is there any room for personal boasting? Why or why not

Read Acts 8:26-40. Who did Philip find when he went where the angel told him to go? Where was this man from? What was he doing? What did Philip ask this man? What was the man's response? What was Philip able to do with this man? What was the man's response? Who arranged the meeting between Philip and this man? Was the man looking for a Savior? What explanation is there for his faith? What was his response when he came up out of the water of baptism?

Read Philippians 1:27-30. How should we live our lives, all the time? Why do those who oppose the Gospel hate the Gospel and those who share it? What has been granted, as a gift, to believers in Christ? What encouragement does that give to us?

Read Romans 6:15-19. All people are slaves to something. What are unbelievers slaves to? What are believers slaves to? Look at verses 17-18 especially and consider how Paul talks about being a slave to righteousness and to God. What kinds of adjectives does he use? What response does he have in being a slave to God? What encouragement should believers have from this?

Read 1 Peter 2:11-12. Why should we keep our conduct honorable? Will this *stop* accusations from those who hate God? On the day of judgment, what will these people *clearly* see?

The world is watching, ladies. The world is watching to see how we, as Christians, react to the stress of this life and to opposition. We won't do everything perfectly, but we should be the first to repent when we sin, knowing that we have been brought from death to life through the power of Christ on the cross. As you spend time with God today, consider what your everyday life and relationships say about your Savior. Are you quick to repent? Are you, as Romans 12 says, living at peace with everyone (so far as it is up to you)? Consider what kind of a witness you are for your Savior and, if necessary, repent of bringing shame onto His name. Ask Him to help you, daily, to live in a manner that brings Him glory.

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## Lesson 5: Not Our Glory/Vicarious Glory

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-11. What was of first importance? Why is that of first importance? What evidence does Paul give to that? Where does Paul fit in this plan? Why is that important?

Read Galatians 3:15-26. Was the covenant made with Abraham voided? Where was that covenant found to be fulfilled? Why, according to verse 19, was the law given? Did the law replace the covenant with Abraham? How did it work with that covenant? Could the law give life? What change happened when Christ came? Did His coming erase the covenant with Abraham and the law that was given? Why are we no longer under the guardian of the law?

Read Romans 7:7-12. Is the law sin? What does the law reveal to us about ourselves? Does the law produce life in us? What can be said about the law and the commandment?

Read Romans 3:21-31. What condition are *all* men in? How are all those who are His actually justified? What does “propitiation” mean? Why is that an important concept? In what ways do we see God’s righteousness highlighted through Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf? (Verses 25-26) Can we, then, boast in our own righteousness or ability to save ourselves? Why or why not? Does this show the law to be worthless?

Read Ezekiel 36:22-27 Why does God say He is going to act? Even as He acts for this reason, who benefits from His actions? What, specifically, do we see that God will do for His people? (verses 25-27) What does it mean to be given a new heart? In all of this, is there anything that the people can or are supposed to contribute to acquire what God promises here?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, remember that it is *He* who changes your very heart and affections, who makes you love *Him* and who draws you to Him, to love His laws and be able to obey them. Ask God to help you to love Him more and more each day, to love His Word and to learn to trust Him more every single day. Thank Him for the gift of faith that He has given to you, that you might believe and be saved, that you might be covered with the blood of His Son. Praise Him that, although your sin is truly great, His mercy is *more* and covers it all.

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## Lesson 6: Let There Be (More) Light

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Read Mark 4:10-12. Who does Jesus say will be able to understand parables? What does Jesus say, quoting from Isaiah, the purpose of parables actually is? How does this help us to see why some don't understand the Gospel?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16. What is the wisdom of this age heading for? What wisdom will last? How have we learned these things? Why does this not leave room for us to boast? Why doesn't the natural person, still dead in their sins, accept the things of God? Where are those who belong to the Lord to learn from?

Read John 10:1-6. Who will follow the shepherd? Why? Knowing what Jesus says in Mark 4 and 1 Corinthians 2, why didn't the people understand what He was saying here?

Read 2 Peter 2:1-3. Where do we see false teachers rising from? How will they act? What will they bring in? What will their end be? What damage will be done because of them? Will they get away with this? How seriously do you see that God takes false teaching?

Read John 1:1-5. How long has Jesus existed? What was done apart from Him? What, according to verses 4-5, was in Jesus for the benefit of men?

Read Romans 10:14-17. How do people come to saving faith in Christ? What does that tell you about the importance of teaching Scripture accurately?

Read Matthew 28:16-20. What authority has been given to Christ? What instruction does Jesus give to the disciples here? Were they doing this alone on their own power?

Read Ephesians 6:10-20. What kind of a battle are we actually in? Are *people* the enemy we are fighting? What tools do we have to fight this battle? How many of these are offensive weapons? What does that tell you about the importance of God's Word?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider those whom you know (and love) who are outside of Christ. Ask God to help you to interact with them with grace and truth, giving an answer for the hope you have in Christ. Remember that you are not the one who saves them, but God does. Point them to Christ, encourage them to study it for themselves so they are not led astray by false teaching. Ask God for grace for each day, and pray for those who are lost or who are trapped in false teaching, and trust that, if they are truly God's, He *will* bring them to Himself.

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## Lesson 7: Jars of Clay (Not The Band)

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Read Philippians 4:10-13. What did Paul rejoice in? Was Paul complaining there? What has Paul *learned* how to do/be? Where does Paul's strength lie? Notice that this doesn't just "happen" to Paul; he has to learn this. What might God be teaching YOU right now, as you rely on His strength?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:26-29. What is the point Paul is making here? How is this truth shown in God's sovereignty in His work in us?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:14-16. Why can the person still dead in their sins not understand these things? Where must this understanding come from?

Read Acts 8:1-4. What was happening against the church in Jerusalem? Where did the people go? What continues to happen to the church? What did those who went out continue to do? How does this also demonstrate God's wisdom that might not be understood as wisdom by the world?

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What does Paul say was the purpose of the "thorn" in his flesh? Does this sound like an easy, simple struggle to deal with? What was Paul's prayer regarding this thorn? What was God's response to Paul? Because of that, what is Paul's response? How does Paul's trial bring glory to God?

Read Acts 5:40-42. What punishment did the apostles receive for preaching in the name of Christ? What was the response of the apostles as they left the council? Did they obey the charge given to them by the council? Again, how do we see God getting the glory through the suffering of these "jars of clay"?

Read Psalm 23:1-6. In this Psalm, where is the hope of the Psalmist placed? What kind of paths does the Psalmist travel? Are they all easy paths? What is the hope the Psalmist has in the hard times? How does God get the glory through His shepherding of the Psalmist?

Read Ephesians 5:15-16. How should we be careful to walk? What should we be doing, knowing that the "days are evil"? What might that look like in *your* life?

Notice, in the above references, that God does not detour the path of the believer *around* suffering, but that our hope and confidence is that, in the *midst* of the suffering, God is always there with us. Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider where your hope is. Is your hope in this world and what it has to offer? Do you find strength and comfort in the Scriptures, or do you only find hope and comfort outside of the Scriptures? We can so easily create idols out of

everything in our lives, ladies, even good things. Where does your hope come from, truly? Are you making the most of the time you are given, endeavoring to glorify God every day? What might need to change in your life for your focus and strength to be on Him? Obedience isn't easy, ladies, but it is worth it. Only God is worthy to be obeyed and glorified. Everything else will fade away. Hold fast to God and ask Him to help renew your heart in Him and in His Word every day.

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## Lesson 8: Temporary Tent vs Permanent Home

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-26. What were some of the people in Corinth claiming? Why is a bodily resurrection so important to our faith? (Verse 16 nails this point home.) Knowing that Christ *has* been raised from the dead, what hope do we have? What is the last enemy to be destroyed?

Read Philippians 1:18b-26. What is Paul's desire and expectation? What does Paul mean when he says that to live is Christ, and to die is gain? What does Paul say is the *better* option? Why is that the better option? What is Paul convinced of? What longing desire do we see in Paul here?

Read Hebrews 9:24-28. Where has Christ entered? Did Christ have to offer a sacrifice repeatedly to do this? How did Jesus put away sin? How many times can a man die? What will they face next? Christ was offered once to do what? What will happen when He appears a second time? What should that knowledge spur us on to in our lives?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:11-15. What is the foundation that our lives must be laid on? What will the day of judgment show about what we have built? If your foundation is truly Christ, can you lose your salvation? What eternal consequence *can* we experience though? Why should we, again, be spurred on to living lives that are set apart for God?

Read Matthew 6:19-21. Where should we be "storing up" treasure for ourselves? Why is this important? Along with 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, we see a principle here that you *can* store up for yourself treasures in heaven, by living lives that are truly built on the foundation of Christ and are set apart for *His* good works. This is *not* saying that your works *save* you; you are still saved by grace alone through faith alone, but your works *are* important, as they demonstrate your love for God.

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider how you are living your life. Are you living a life here that is storing up treasure in heaven, or storing up treasure on earth? Is the foundation of your life *truly* on Christ? Are you continuing to *build* on that foundation with eternal building materials, or are you building with earthly materials that will all disappear? Ask God today to help you to see where your treasure truly is and ask Him to help you to live your life for *Him*, no matter what circumstances you may find yourself in. Be sure of your salvation, ladies, and then share that hope with those around you.

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## Lesson 9: A True New Creation

2 Corinthians 5:11-21

Read Ezekiel 36:22-27. Why does God say He will act? What has been done to His name among the nations? How?

What will God do to vindicate His name? What will He sprinkle on them? Why?

What will God *give* to them? What will He remove from them? What else will He give to them?

What will God cause the people to do?

When do we see this actually fulfilled, where God pours out His Spirit on His people in this fashion?

What does that mean for believers today?

Read John 3:1-8. What question did Nicodemus have for Jesus?

What does Jesus tell Nicodemus must happen before you can see the kingdom of God?

What kind of a birth is He talking about?

Is this something we can control or predict? Linking this passage with 2 Corinthians 5:11-21, how will we know that this has actually occurred?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-16. What “preparation” should we engage in as we walk in Christ? Is this dependent on what you can do on your own? How are we to live?

Read 1 John 3:4-10. What does it mean to “make a practice of sinning”? What benefit do we have because of Christ’s appearing? If you truly abide in Him, do you continue sinning?

Does this mean you no longer sin at all? Why does John say that the Son of God appeared? Why does he say that no one born of God can make a *practice* of sinning?

Why is it evident whose children we are? Can someone who is unregenerate stop sinning all on their own? \*\*

Read Romans 6:1-14. What is the point Paul is making in this passage? How are we united to Christ? What *real* consequences does this have for our lives? What hope does this give us as we struggle against sin every day?

\*\*It is *only* when we have become new creations that we have the ability to *not* succumb to sin. It is only because the Holy Spirit lives inside us that we can actually decrease in sinning.

As you spend time with God today, ladies, consider what it means to be a new creation. Are you living a life as a new creation or are you still trying to hold on to your old life? Can you have both? What does it mean to live as an ambassador for Christ in your life? How can you be a witness to His power and glory in your life?

Ladies, if you aren't sure if you are a new creation today, cry out to God for His mercy. Ask Him to show you mercy and grant you true repentance and ask Him to change your desires and make you love Him more and more. Ask Him to help you to love His Word, to hate your sin and to love HIM most of all, and ask Him to help you to confirm your calling and election in Him.

Repent of anything that is in the way of your relationship with God, and trust that, when you truly repent, God is faithful to forgive and reconcile you to Himself. Praise God today for the gift of Jesus who took on OUR sin so that we might have His righteousness. God is so merciful to us, ladies; praise Him for His mercy today!

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## Lesson 10: True Life with God

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

Read Matthew 13:3-8, 13:18-23. What places did the seeds fall? What happened to the seeds? Which of the seeds actually produced grain? What does Jesus explain that the “seed” is? How many types of hearts do we see here? Are they all actually saved?

Read John 15:1-11. In this analogy, what does Jesus liken Himself to? What part do humans play? There are two groups being spoken of here. How can we differentiate between the two groups? Where does all the actual fruit bearing start from? What is the end result for the unfruitful group? How is God glorified in His people? What must we keep to abide in His love? Why does Jesus say He is giving these instructions? What does that tell you about what it is like to obey God and bear fruit for Him, even when He “prunes” us?

Read Galatians 1:6-9. What has astonished Paul about the Galatian believers? How important is it, according to Paul here, to get the Gospel *right*? Why is this a big deal?

Read Galatians 5:7-12. How did the Galatian believers start out? What has happened? What caution does Paul give to them? What does Paul say, in very strong terms, regarding those who would add circumcision as a necessary action to be saved? Again, what does this show us about how important it is to get the Gospel *right*?

Read 1 Peter 3:8-17. What kind of unity does Peter call for here? Why does Peter instruct them *not* to repay evil for evil? What are they supposed to do instead? As Peter quotes from Psalm 34, what is the point He is making? Why should we not fear or be troubled? What should our focus be? What should we always be ready to do? In what manner are we to do this? Why is it better to suffer for doing good, if that is God’s will, than for doing evil?

Read Romans 12:14-21. What specific instructions are we given as to how to treat those who might persecute us? What things should characterize our lives? What should be the overarching “theme” of our lives?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What things describe how we once lived? Be as specific as possible. What changed our lives? Why? What are we promised in the future? Is any of this of our own doing? What was prepared beforehand for those in Christ? What does that tell you about where your life is now and what your focus should be?

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19. What should we, as Christians, *not* be surprised at? How should we respond instead? Why? Why are we blessed to suffer for the name of Christ? *How* should we endure when we suffer for His name? Where should we place our trust as we suffer? Why can we do that?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider whatever trials you have gone through or are currently going through. How are you proclaiming Who your Savior is through your suffering? Is suffering in this world something that a Christian should fear? How does Paul's life give us an example of how to suffer well and to have hope through our suffering? How are you enduring for the sake of Christ?

Charles Spurgeon once said, "Remember this, had any other condition been better for you than the one in which you are, divine love would have put you there." Ladies, whatever you are going through today, if you belong to Christ, you are right where God wants you. If you have sin that you need to repent of? Do it and trust that God will forgive you as He promises and hold fast to Him. If you are in the midst of suffering right now, ask God to give you the grace, every day, to endure and to suffer *well* for His name's sake. Know that He is not unaware of your suffering, ladies. He is *with* you in it. He is faithful, even when we are not. Hold fast to Him today, and every day.

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## Lesson 11: Guard the Company You Keep

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

Read Isaiah 52:11. What is being urged in this verse? Paul appears to be quoting from this passage here in 2 Corinthians 6. This passage in Isaiah was directed at the priests and Levites, yet, as we know from the New Testament, believers are a “royal priesthood.” Thus, Paul applies this passage here, demonstrating the need for God’s people to be separate from the peoples around them, to be purified for God.

Read Ezekiel 36:16-19. Why did God pour out His wrath upon His people? What was the punishment they had to endure? In accordance with *what* did God judge them? Knowing that being sent out to live among pagan nations was a *punishment* for sin and rebellion against God, how big a deal is it for the people to knowingly choose to partner with pagan peoples instead of honoring God?

Read Ezekiel 36:22-28. Why does God say He is going to act? What has been done to His name among the nations because of the unfaithfulness of the people? What will the nations know? Where will God gather them from? What will He do for them? Who does the gathering back? Who restores? Who provides not only the environment but the desire to honor God?

Read Matthew 12:25-30. What does Jesus point out is unable to stand? Was Jesus casting out demons by the power of Satan? Would it make any sense for Satan to use his power to cast out demons? What does Jesus point out is actually happening (verse 28)? Who can plunder the goods of the strong man? In that analogy, what role does Jesus play? (Hint...Jesus isn’t the strongman there...remember, He came to free the captives...we are the “goods” that are being plundered.) Who does Jesus say is *not* with Him? Is there any middle ground? Why is this important to realize?

Read 1 Peter 1:13-19. Who do we belong to? What relationship do we have with God? What are we called to be? How then should we conduct ourselves?

Read Romans 12:1-2. How are we to present ourselves to God? What should we *not* be conformed to? What *should* we be conformed to? Knowing this, why is it important to live lives for God, as He decrees?

Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. Why should we, as God’s people, be concerned about holy living? What is significant about our very bodies? Why should we flee sexual sin specifically? Do we belong only to ourselves? What has been done for us, that we might live set apart lives?

Read Romans 6:16-19. Everyone is a slave to something, either to sin or to righteousness. Describe what it looks like to be a slave to sin. What does it look like to be a slave to righteousness. Do those two lives have anything in common? Knowing that, how can we apply that truth to 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider how you are living. Are you living, holy and set apart to God? Or are you living compromising, offering yourself to the world to partner with what the world wants you to do? Paul is not talking about not associating with anyone who isn't a Christian, but, sisters, please consider whether you are using that as an excuse to engage in activities that you know are not honoring to God. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. How are you doing with that balance? Ask God to help you to see where you might need to pull back from the world, where you may be drifting in to sin instead of striding toward holiness. And, ask God to help you to see where you might need to step *out* of your comfort to offer the hope of the Gospel to those around you. There is a balance we must find, ladies, and it isn't easy. Ask God to help you, today, to want to find the right balance, the balance that glorifies Him, that makes much of *Him* in all you do.

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## Lesson 12: Doing Life in the Body of Christ

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

Read Psalm 51:1-19. When did David write this Psalm? What sin(s) had David committed? How can you tell from this Psalm that David was truly repentant? Who does he say he has, ultimately, sinned against? Where does David look to for hope?

Read Matthew 18:15-20. What is the point of this passage? How are we to interact with our brothers and sisters in Christ, when sin must be addressed?

Read Matthew 7:1-5. What care should we take when we judge our brothers and sisters? Why is this a big deal? Does this passage say *not* to judge our brothers and sisters? Why is *that* an important thing to realize as well?

Read Galatians 6:1-5. How should we strive to restore those caught in sin? What caution is given here? What does Paul say “fulfills the law of Christ”? Whose work should we be concerned about?

Read Philippians 2:1-4. What principles do we see here about how we should engage with our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Read Romans 13:8-10. What are we to “owe” each other, as brothers and sisters in Christ? What does Paul say is fulfilling the law here?

Read 1 John 1:8-10. What can we say that would be deceiving ourselves? What comfort do we have offered here? Why is it important that we not try to claim that we do not sin?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider your relationships with other believers. How are you doing at giving grace to your brothers and sisters? At encouraging them? At pointing them back to Scripture in a loving way? At bearing their burdens? How are you doing at letting *others* encourage you? Point *you* back to Scripture? Bear *your* burdens? The life of a Christian is not an easy one, and it is not mean to be lived solo (just you and Jesus), but to be lived in the context of the local body of believers. Ladies, how do you view *your* sin? Do you hate your sin? Do you truly want it gone? Or do you want to keep your sin secret so that you don't have to address it? Ask God to help you to hate that sin you once loved, to truly have godly sorrow over your sin and to turn from that sin in true repentance. If that means you need to seek forgiveness from someone you have sinned against? Do it. Don't wait. Then, rest in the knowledge that, when you ask Him to forgive you? He not only forgives you, but cleanses you from *all* unrighteousness. Praise God for His grace and mercy, ladies. We are showered with that mercy and grace every, single, day.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 13: Giving to God's Glory

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Read Philippians 4:10-13. Is contentment dependent on affluence? What has Paul learned? Does it encourage you to see that Paul had to learn this, that he wasn't super human in this way? What circumstances do you struggle to be content in?

Read 1 Peter 4:8-11. In the body of Christ, how are we to interact with each other? What should be the overarching "theme" in our interactions? What might this look like when put into practice? Who, ultimately, are we serving and living for?

Read Acts 4:32-35. How did the people in Acts interact with each other? What was unusual about how they lived? Is this a proscription (command) for us today? Why was this so important for the believers at that time and in that place? How might we apply this today?

Read Matthew 25:31-40. What event is in view here? What is God doing? What does God say in commendation of those who are His sheep? *Who* are we to "do these things" to, first and foremost? Does that mean we shouldn't give to the poor in general? What does that tell us about how important it is to take care of the body of Christ?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12. Lest we should think that the body of Christ should be abused, we see Paul's letter here to the church in Thessalonica. What is Paul warning the people about here? What does this tell us about the balance between work and receiving of help?

Ladies, there is a balance in our lives that we must be careful to watch. We must not be idle, but we must work, without expecting others to take care of our responsibilities. At the same time, we are to help our brothers and sisters in need as we are able, before we provide for the needs of the world at large. If we are providing for the widows of the world but we have widows and orphans in our churches who are in need, we are not caring for the body of Christ as we should. This is a hard balance to find in our world today, as the push for political policies that *force* giving without the giver having any control over where that money goes. As you spend time with God today, consider how you view your assets. Do you realize they are God's, and not yours? Are you generous with your funds and talents and time, first to care for God's people, then to the world at large? The principle in Scripture is *not* that a few should do all the work and the many should benefit, but that all should be engaged in work and that the abundance of one should assist the shortfall of others. As our world gets more and more confused on this subject, ask God to help you to have clarity. Ask Him to help you to be content where you are at, and to be wise and generous in sharing what He has graciously given to you to steward.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 14: Trustworthy Men in Service to God

2 Corinthians 8:16-24

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7. What qualifications do you see for elders/pastors here? \*\*\*Are these men “super Christians”? Looking at these qualifications, how does that eliminate many potential issues at the outset? If a man truly has these qualifications, how does that help assure the people that he isn’t just greedy or power hungry?

Read Titus 1:5-9. What similarities do you see in this qualification list? What differences might there be? Again, are these men “super Christians”? \*\*\*

Read James 3:1-2. Why shouldn’t everyone become teachers? Why is this a big deal?

Read 1 Timothy 5:17-20. What special consideration should be given to elders/pastors who rule *well*? What might that look like? What principle is Paul pointing to as he talks about “muzzling an ox”?\*\* What labor does an elder/pastor do? What should be done for them?

\*\*Read 1 Corinthians 9:8-11. What do you see Paul mention here that parallels what he mentioned in 1 Timothy? Is Paul overly concerned about animal rights? What is he concerned about? How does this help you understand the passage in 1 Timothy?

Read Hebrews 13:16-18. As the author of Hebrews is finishing up this letter, he encourages the readers to certain actions. What does he encourage them *not* to do? What should be their attitude in submission to their leaders? Why is this important? What prayer request does the author share as well. What does this help us to see about the work and that pastor’s/leaders do and how those who are under their authority should respond to them?

\*\*\*The description given is not that of super Christians. These men are to be *mature* in the faith, established, tested and shown to love God more than anything else. These men should be examples for the body of Christ, and their attributes are those that are totally attainable by those who earnestly pursue God and desire to honor and obey Him in everything.

\*\*In Deuteronomy 25:4, God is giving directions for His people for their civil laws. Many of these laws demonstrate God’s economy and were intended to demonstrate that God’s people would live differently than the world. The ox would be used to help separate the grain and the concept here was that it was not right to prevent the ox from partaking of some of his own labor. The law was given not only to protect animals, but also, as the other nations would do whatever they could to increase their income, this action showed that God’s people were to show concern even for their beasts in a very practical way. The principle is then applied here, in Timothy and 1

Corinthians, by Paul, to demonstrate that, even more than an ox, God is concerned for His people, and the laborer should not be deprived of wages when they have worked to earn them. The pastor should be given an income for the labor that he puts forth on behalf of God's people, and God's people should not be resentful about providing that for the pastor, recognizing the benefits they are receiving firsthand from the pastor.

Ladies, as you spend time in prayer today, praise God for godly pastors. If you sit under godly, sound teaching, *praise God* for that gift. Pray for your pastor(s) and ask God to bless them and to show you ways you can encourage them in their ministry, knowing that they are held to a higher standard by God and that they have real work that they are doing on behalf of their people. If you are in conflict with the pastors who are in authority over you, pray about that, and work to find a resolution if that is possible. Consider how you are called, just as every Christian is called, to a life of holiness, and to glorify God in all that you do. Ask God to help you to want to honor Him, to learn what *does* honor Him, and to obey Him with a cheerful heart. Thank God for the overseers who are overseeing your soul, and work with them as they work to help you to learn to grow in all life and godliness.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 15: Giving for the Glory of God

2 Corinthians 9:1-15

Read Matthew 5:33-37. Why does Jesus say we shouldn't swear oaths at all? What does it mean to swear an oath? \*\* Instead, what does Jesus say we should do?

Read 1 Peter 4:7-11. How does Peter warn the people to behave? *Why* should they behave this way? What benefit does viewing one another through love bring with it? What should be done without grumbling? How should we use whatever we've been given? Does this include our financial resources? What is the ultimate goal?

Read Matthew 25:14-30. Who has given to each of us what we have? What does that include?

How do we use what we've been given to further our Master's goals?

Re-read Matthew 25:31-40. (We read this a couple of lessons ago.) Again, *who* should we first and foremost provide care for?

Read 1 Corinthians 12:27-28. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but what do you see here listed as a gift that might surprise you? How might we see this gift used in the body of Christ?

Read John 3:16-18. What is the gift that God has given? What was the purpose of this gift? Why do we need this gift?

As you spend time with God today, consider how your giving of your wealth as well as of your talents and time reflect on your Master. How do you give?

Are you able to give cheerfully? Do you see giving as not just an act of obedience, but one of worship? How seriously should we, as believers, take the promises we make, or the promises that are made to us? Why?

At the root of it all, we must realize that we are to give in this way because we have been given so much; the inexpressible gift of our Savior, given on our behalf, is a gift we can never repay but which should still influence how we choose to live every day. Ask God to help you to have a right perspective on giving, to repent of any sin that might be interfering with that, and to draw you close to Him, to learn how to give for HIS glory, alone.

\*\*In Bible times, swearing an oath involved invoking the name or authority of someone greater than you as evidence of how seriously you took the oath you were making. To make an oath on the name of the Lord was the most *serious* of all oaths, and that was to be taken *very* seriously,

especially if you did not fulfill whatever you swore to do. Here, Jesus is pointing out that swearing an oath on *anything* is actually a problem because if you take an oath on, for example, the heavens, the heavens are above you but then, taking an oath on the earth is also a big deal because the earth is in submission to God as well. Therefore, there is no “thing” or “person” (including yourself) that you can safely “swear by” to demonstrate your desire to keep the oath you have made that is not already out of your control.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 16: Necessary Defense

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Read 1 John 4:19-21. Why do we love God? If we truly love God, what will we not do? Why? What commandment have we been given? Why is our care and concern for one another, here, reflective of our care and concern for God and for the things of God?

Read Galatians 5:8-11. What have these people left behind? What are they returning to? Paul asks how they can do this when they are known in what way? Why is *that* important?

Read James 2:18-19. What *will* accompany saving faith? What example does James give of those who believe in God but are most definitely not saved? Why should this be a sober reminder to us that not everyone who *says* they believe in God are necessarily saved?

Read Galatians 3:1-3 and 5:2-3. What does Paul say has happened to the believers in Galatia here? What are they trying to perfect themselves with? What were they trying to *add* to the Gospel?

Read Philippians 1:12-18. What causes Paul to rejoice here? What is the “big picture” that he is concerned about?

Read John 14:15-17. What will those who truly love Christ do? What will be given to them?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. What is the point that Paul made to these Corinthian believers here? Who has *true* wisdom? Where should *all* boasting lie?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, is there something that you are struggling to submit to that you need to set aside? Is there some idol or stronghold that is keeping you focused on yourself instead of on God? Are you striving to boast *only* in God, or in yourself? Are you working for your own accolades or for God’s glory? Where is *your* confidence? In the uncertainties of this life, as health, wealth and everything else are so fleeting, are you trusting in God to provide what you need, or are you trusting in your stock portfolio and your vitamins to keep you secure? Spend some time in Psalms, reminding yourself of who God truly is, and His faithfulness, and rest in *Him* alone for all that you need.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 17: False Gospel from False Apostles by False Spirits

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Read Luke 7:36-50. What happens in the house of the Pharisee that makes the Pharisee cranky? What does the Pharisee say to himself about Jesus? What is the name of this Pharisee? What example does Jesus give him? Why does Jesus say that this woman loves him so much? Why must we understand who we *really* are before God?

Read 2 Peter 1:5-11. What list of qualities are we to strive for in our walk with Christ? Is this an exhaustive list? What encouragement are we given if we have these qualities? What should we be diligent to do? Why?

Read 1 John 2:4-6, 2:9-11, 2:15-16. What fruit will there be in those who are truly saved? What contrasts are given?

Read Galatians 1:6-9. How many saving Gospels are there? What should happen to anyone who preaches a Gospel different from what is found in Scripture? Why is this a big deal?

Read Jude 1:4-8. What is Jude's concern here? What heavenly events do we see described here?

What was the consequence for Sodom and Gomorrah? What are these false teachers relying on in order to teach these false doctrines? Why is this a problem?

Read 1 John 1:8-10. What contrast do we see here? How can we deceive ourselves?

What comfort do we have? How big a deal is it to say this? What should that tell us about anyone who *does* make this claim?

Ladies, Paul gives a very sober warning regarding false teachers here, and we would do well to heed this warning as well. As you spend time with God today, examine yourself. Are you listening to teachers who are engaging and entertaining, but who are not teaching the truth of Scripture? How will you know? What must *you* do to be sure you are following the right path? Thank God for providing you with His Word so that you can, truly, know for yourself what Scripture teaches. Ask Him to help continue to give you wisdom and insight to be able to discern truth from falsehood, and to love His Word and hold fast to it in your life.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 18: Follow the Example of Christ

2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Read Philippians 2:5-11. What is ours in Christ Jesus? What form did Christ have? What form did Jesus take on? How can we follow that example? To what extent did Christ humble Himself? Again, how might we follow that example? What has God done for Christ? What will God do, also, for us? (Think about Romans 8)

Read Philippians 3:2-11. Does Paul recommend following the example of his life in the flesh? Why is this “resume” of Paul’s a big deal? What does Paul count this “resume” to be? What does Paul strive to attain, by any and all means?

Read John 15:1-11. What happens to every branch that does not bear fruit? What happens to every branch that *does* bear fruit? What is the only way to bear fruit? What does that tell us about how a Christian must live? If we are abiding in Christ, what will our desires line up with? How does that help us to understand verse 7? How does Jesus sum all of this up in verses 10 and 11? Is it arduous to live lives for God?

Read Psalm 62:5-12. Who is the source of all our strength? What encouragement does the Psalmist give here? What will ultimately last? Why is that an encouragement and a warning?

Read Psalm 63:1-8. How can we be filled up with what we need? What should we be giving our attention to in all things? How does this help us when we are overwhelmed with the trials of life?

Ladies, what example are you following? Are you filling up with God daily, or with something else? What is your source of comfort? Where do you go when you are frightened? Where should your comfort be? As you spend time with God today, ask Him to help you to want to know Him better, to love His Word more, and to live a life that is glorifying to Him, following the example of His Son. Ask Him to help you to prioritize Him, and ask Him to help you to find all that you need in His Word, His promises, and the hope you have from Him. He alone is worthy, ladies. Seek Him.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 19: Revelations and Thorns

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Go to Biblegateway (or another online source) and type in the keyword “heaven”. How much of what you find actually tells you about what heaven looks like or will be like?

Do you find any mention about people becoming angels of any sort?

What do you generally find is mentioned about why we look forward to heaven?

What should our focus be when we consider heaven?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Keep in mind, this is in the context of the body of Christ, showing love to the members of the body, care for the body of Christ. In *all* things, how should we interact with each other? Do we know everything at this point? Where does boasting fit in with this?

What is the constant we must hold to?

Read James 4:4-10. Can you be intimate with the world and with God? Why? How does God react to those full of pride? How does react to those who are humble? Should we seek to exalt ourselves, or be exalted by God? Can we do earn this ourselves?

Read Matthew 20:1-16. What is the “base pay” that we will all receive? Is this unfair of God? What is flipped in God’s economy?

Read Matthew 20:20-28. What was the request of the *mother* of these disciples? What is Jesus’ response? What do we learn about God’s economy here as well? What does leadership in God’s kingdom truly look like?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-16. What things are we able to understand that the world is not able to understand?

What do we have that the world doesn’t? Why is this so important as we make decisions and move forward in life?

Read James 1:2-5. What should we consider trials to be? Why? What can we ask God for and know He will give to us generously? Again, how does all of this demonstrate that God’s economy is different than the way the world works?

Read Philippians 2:14-18. How does Paul direct us to do all things?

Why is this so important?

Paul will rejoice with them even if what happens? What should they do likewise? A gain, what is different about this perspective from how the world thinks of things?

Ladies, as you spend time with God today, consider where your hope truly is. Are you living a life that shows God's economy or the world's? Are you looking for that next experience in order to make much of yourself, or are you looking to God's Word and to the application of His Word in your life to make much of HIM? Where is your focus at? Ask God to help you to learn, as Paul had to, to be content in all circumstances, and, more than that, to give thanks to God no matter the circumstances you are in. Praise God for giving you what is of immeasurable value: His Son and your salvation through Him. God is good, and He is always faithful ladies. Trust Him.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 20: Sola Deo Gloria

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

Read 1 Peter 5:1-5. What should be the attitude of the shepherds of the body? What should be the motivation of those who are in authority in the body? What role do the younger people have? What instruction is applicable for ALL the people? Why?

Read Colossians 2:8-10. What should we be careful of? Why should we hold to Christ instead?

Read Romans 14:1-4. In matters that are not essential to the Gospel, how should we engage with brothers and sisters in Christ? Why should we not pass judgment on each other in these things? Who is it that makes each of us stand or fall?

Read Proverbs 16:18-19. What does pride bring, ultimately?

Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12. Who does Paul warn the reader to stay away from? What example does Paul give? Why does he say they did this? What are these people actually busying themselves in? What command is given to them? How can we apply this to ourselves?

Read Ephesians 4:25-32. What should we, as followers of Christ, put away? What are we not to use as an excuse to sin? As Paul gives examples here of “do nots” and “dos” what do you find steps on your toes? How do these actions and attitudes tie in with our motives and our goals? What principle *should* guide our actions?

Ladies, our pride is so insidious. It is so easy to get distracted and think we are being righteous, when, truly, we are being foolish. Pride can impact every area of our lives and make us lose our focus on God. As you spend time with God today, consider how your pride may be influencing your witness of the God you serve. Are you busy at the work God has given you, or are you a busy body? Ask God to show you how your pride may be blinding you to sin in your life. Repent and ask God to help you to kill that sin. Be willing to see your sin for what it is, ladies, and ask God to continue to sanctify you, knowing that sanctification is part of the process in growing closer to Him.

# 2 Corinthians

## Lesson 21: Passing the Test

2 Corinthians 13:1-14

Read Matthew 7:21-23. What does Jesus say many will say to Him? What will Jesus respond to them? Did Jesus EVER know them? What works have those people actually done? Why should this push us to want to know if we are truly saved or not?

Read Galatians 5:16-26. Ponder the list that Paul gives of evidence of the works of the flesh. Which of these things (and this is not an all inclusive list) do you struggle with? Spend some time asking God to grow in you the fruit of the *Spirit* in verses 22-23, and repent of those sins which you know are opposed to the fruit of the Spirit.

Read John 17:1-10. Look carefully at verse 9. Who is included in this group that *Jesus is praying for*? What hope and assurance do you find in this chapter (feel free to go beyond verse 10) as Christ prays this prayer on behalf of His people?

Read 1 John 5:13. Why did John write the letter of 1 John? Read through the whole book of 1 John. John gives examples throughout this letter of fruit of a true believer and fruit of one who is not a true believer. A helpful exercise is to make a list comparing those things and then to truly examine yourself in light of them. The assurance of your salvation is something you can have, ladies. God's Word has the answers.

Ladies, take heart! Your Savior is interceding on your behalf to the Father; and He has been praying for you since before you were born! Praise God that He has given you His Word that you may know that you are His. Thank Him for the grace He shows to us daily, for how He equips us to pass the ultimate test. Everything we need for life and godliness is found in Him; He is the true treasure! As you spend time with God today, thank Him for His Word, for the warnings that are within His Word, but also for the hope and assurance and comfort that is found in His Word. We have the true Gospel at our fingertips and that's a gift, ladies. May God continue to sanctify us and to strengthen us each and every day for *His* glory and for our good.