

Hello!

We are so glad that you decided to join us in studying 2 Corinthians.

This winter we will be studying the second half of Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church. This letter is very personal and filled with passion! As we study, we'll be moved and challenged by Paul's love for Jesus and the church, his single-minded commitment to the truth, and his unshakeable trust in God, and dependence on God, in the midst of suffering and rejection.

Are you wondering how to deepen the roots of your faith as you face the future? Join us to learn from the Apostle Paul.

During each week of our study we will regularly guide you through three steps:

Step #1 - LOOK at the text

- As you read through a passage of 2 Corinthians at home in preparation for our weekly meetings, you will answer a series of questions to help you understand what the author is trying to communicate in this section of the book. You will also have the opportunity to see how this passage connects to other parts of the bible, and to reflect on how this passage teaches you to worship God better.
- You will discuss what you learned when you get together with your small group each week.

Step #2 - LEARN from the text

- One of our large group teachers will teach on the text, drawing out biblical themes and application points.

Step #3 - LIVE in light of the text

- After the time of teaching, you will have an opportunity to answer application questions at your tables. As we grow in our knowledge of God and his word, it should affect our attitudes and our actions. This discussion time will naturally lead into a time of prayer, since we need God's help to live as his people.

We look forward to learning from God and from each other as we study 2 Corinthians together!

Winter Semester Schedule:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE & LESSON	MONDAY STUDY	WEDNESDAY STUDY
2 Corinthians 8:1-15 The Ministry of Giving: Finish the Collection	January 11	January 13
2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15 The Ministry of Giving: Titus and the Brothers	January 18	January 20
2 Corinthians 10:1-18 Paul Confronts: Boasting	January 25	January 27
2 Corinthians 11:1-15 Paul Confronts: Super Apostles	February 1	February 3
2 Corinthians 11:16-29 Paul Confronts: The Fool (Part 1)	February 8	February 10
2 Corinthians 11:30-12:13 Paul Confronts: The Fool (Part 2)	February 22	February 17
2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10 Paul Prepares: The Future Visit	March 1	February 24
2 Corinthians 13:11-15 Epilogue	March 8	March 3

Resources/Commentaries used for this study:

IVP Bible Background Commentary: NT - Craig Keener
 Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament - Carson & Beale
 Baker Exegetical Commentary Series - 2 Corinthians - Guthrie
 New American Commentary Series - 2 Corinthians - Garland

All Scripture passages are taken from the New International Version.

2 Corinthians Outline

Part 1 - Fall Semester

Week 1-ORIENTATION WEEK

Week 2-2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Week 3-2 Corinthians 1:12-2:13

Week 4-2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

Week 5-2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Week 6-2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Week 7-2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Week 8-2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Week 9-2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

Week 10-2 Corinthians 6:3-7:4

Week 11-2 Corinthians 7:5-16

Intro and Prologue

Paul Explains: Why did He not Come Directly to Corinth?

Who is Qualified for Ministry?

What is the Nature of the Ministry? It's Glorious.

What is the Nature of the Ministry? It's Truthful.

What is the Nature of the Ministry? It Involves Suffering.

What Sustains the Ministry? A Future Hope.

What Response is Required? Being Reconciled to God!

What Response is Required? Open Hearts and Pure Lives.

The Happy Result of Responding Well

Part 2 - Winter Semester

Week 1-2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Week 2-2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15

Week 3-2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Week 4-2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Week 5-2 Corinthians 11:16-29

Week 6-2 Corinthians 11:30-12:13

Week 7-2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10

Week 8-2 Corinthians 13:11-15

The Ministry of Giving: Finish the Collection

The Ministry of Giving: Titus and the Brothers

Paul Confronts: Boasting

Paul Confronts: Super Apostles

Paul Confronts: The Fool - Part 1

Paul Confronts: The Fool - Part 2

Paul Prepares: The Future Visit

Epilogue

All of our resources (workbooks, weekly teaching videos) are available on our webpage: northview.org/women



Ancient Map of the Mediterranean (Source: Baker Exegetical Commentary - 2 Corinthians)



Modern Map of the Mediterranean (Source: Google Maps)

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.

Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

¹⁰ And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter.

Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

¹² For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.

The goal is equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Lesson 12: The Ministry of Giving: Finish the Collection

Introduction to Part II of our Study

Paul begins 2 Corinthians 8 with the words “And now, brothers and sisters...” These words “and now” demonstrate that Paul is starting a new topic, focusing their thoughts towards a new idea. In our everyday speaking and writing we do the same thing. If we’re teaching a child how to tie their shoe we may say - “Great, you know how to intertwine the laces, AND NOW you need to learn how to do the bow.” The words “and now” bridge the gap between a past event or topic of conversation and a future event or topic of conversation.

In Part 1 of our 2 Corinthians study, we worked through the first half of this letter which Paul wrote to the church in Corinth. 2 Corinthians 1-7 focused on issues that Paul had worked through with this church in the past. A summary of these lessons is listed below:

- Lesson 3 (1 Cor 1:12 - 2:13) - Paul had told the Corinthians church that he was going to visit and then he changed his mind, so he spends time explaining why he sent Titus to visit them with a letter of correction instead of coming himself.
- Lesson 4 (2 Corinthians 2:14 - 3:6) - Since false teachers had influenced the church in Corinth, and had caused rifts between Paul and this congregation, Paul describes the kind of person who is qualified to be a minister of the gospel: someone who reflects Jesus and rests in Jesus.
- Lessons 5 to 8 (2 Corinthians 3:7 - 5:10) - Paul then describes what true gospel ministry looks like. He says that it is glorious, truthful, and involves suffering. True gospel ministry is sustained by our future hope: eternity spent with God in a new heavens and earth.
- Lessons 9 to 10 (2 Corinthians 5:11 - 7:4) - In these chapters Paul exhorts the Corinthians to order their lives around the true gospel. He calls them to be reconciled to God, and to be reconciled to him and the other true apostles.
- Lesson 11 (2 Corinthians 7:5-16) - Paul ends the first section of this letter by commending them for the way that they received the letter which Titus delivered. It seems that they have repented of their attitude towards Paul and want to be reconciled, and so now he wants to focus on what is next for them as a church.
- AND NOW... Let’s study what Paul wants the Corinthians to do next....

Small Group Discussion: LOOK at the text

1. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 together. As you read underline or highlight all the references to the Macedonians (all references to 'they/their' refer to the Macedonians).
 - a) Where is Macedonia? Locate this province on the map on page 4.
 - i) Commentators point out that when Paul is speaking about the "Macedonian churches", he is referencing the churches which he planted in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea.
 - b) What does Paul want the Corinthians to know about the Macedonian churches?
 - i) What were the churches in Macedonia experiencing?
 - ii) How were they acting in the midst of their experiences? What were they doing?
 - How do Paul's words convict or challenge you? Do you act the same way when you face these sorts of experiences?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 8:6-7 together and highlight or circle all the references to the Corinthians ('you').
 - a) What is Paul asking the Corinthian church to do, in light of the Macedonian's example?
 - i) What does he affirm about the Corinthian church? (all references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians).
 - ii) What does he call them to do?
 - What do you think this means?

3. Read 2 Corinthians 8:8-12 together and highlight or circle underline all references to the Corinthians ('you'). Then read it again and highlight or put a square around references to Jesus.

a) What does Paul say about the nature of his exhortation to the Corinthian church? Is he giving them a "law to follow"? What words does he use to explain his intentions in these verses?

b) What does he teach about Jesus in these verses?

i) Why do you think Paul says these things about Jesus here, at this point in his argument?

ii) What are the similarities between 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 and 8:9?

c) What does he call them to do? What action does he focus on in these verses?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 together.

a) What is Paul's goal?

5. Thinking through these 15 verses, how would you clarify Paul's big idea?

a) "And now..." (What? :-) Finish the sentence!

Small Group Discussion: Whole Bible Connections

As Paul ends his argument in these verses, he quotes the Old Testament to make a point. Let's look at the passage he is quoting in order to establish why he's quoting these verses.

1. Read Exodus 16:1-12 as a group and quickly summarize the setting of this story. What is going on in these verses?

2. Read Exodus 16:13-21 as a group.
 - a. Paul quotes Exodus 16:18 in 2 Corinthians 8:15.
 - i. What does this verse teach about God's provision of manna in the wilderness?

 - b. What does this story teach about God's desire for his people?
 - i. How does this principle tie in to what Paul is trying to teach the Corinthians?

 - c. What happens when people hold onto the manna overnight rather than eating it, in Exodus 16?

 - d. How might the consequences of holding onto manna too long in Exodus 16 also be applicable to the Corinthians?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 13

The Ministry of Giving: Titus and the Brothers

2
Corinthians

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 4** Work through Whole Bible Connections.
- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 8:16-9:15

¹⁶ Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you.

¹⁷ For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.

¹⁸ And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.

¹⁹ What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.

²⁰ We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.

²¹ For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

²² In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you.

²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

²⁴ Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

9¹ There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people.

² For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

³ But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be.

⁴ For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident.

⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised.

Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

⁹ As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever.”

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 8:16 - 9:15

Lesson 13: The Ministry of Giving: Titus and the Brothers

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups?
 - a. God

 - b. Jesus Christ (all references to 'Lord or Christ' refer to Jesus)

 - c. Titus (8:16-17, 23)
 - i. What do you learn about Titus' attitude?

 - ii. What do you learn about Titus' position?

 - d. The brother(s) - individually (8:18-22)
 - i. The first brother (8:18-21)

 - ii. The second brother (8:22)

 - e. The brothers - corporately (8:23-9:5)
 - i. How are the brothers described?

 - ii. Why is Paul sending the brothers?

 - f. The Corinthians (all the references to 'you/your' are referring to the Corinthians)
 - i. What is the attitude of Paul, Timothy, Titus and the brothers towards the Corinthians?

ii. What does this text tell us about the Corinthians' attitude?

iii. What is Paul telling the Corinthians to do?

iv. What does Paul say will be the result of their actions?

g. Paul and Timothy (all the references to 'we/I/us/me/our' refer to Paul and Timothy)

i. How are they protecting themselves from false accusations as they make plans to collect and administer the gift?

ii. What do they know and boast about regarding the Corinthians?

h. The Macedonians

2. **What** do you learn about the offering in this text?

a. How is it described?

b. Who does it seem to be for? If you're not sure, make an educated guess and then check your answer when you get to the Whole Bible Connections section.

3. **What** are the key ideas about giving that Paul teaches in this text?

- a. How would you characterize your own giving? What words would you use to describe it?
 - b. Does Paul teach that those who give financially will be rewarded financially, or not? What words/ideas would you point to in the text to defend your position?
4. **What** does Paul say should accompany our confession of the gospel?
 5. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!
 6. **Where** should our gifts be scattered and **why**??
 7. **Why** will 'others' praise and thank God according to this text?
 8. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 8:16-24
 - b. 2 Corinthians 9:1-5
 - c. 2 Corinthians 9:6-15
 9. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

The offering. Last week we began speaking about the offering that is being referred to in this text, but let's read about it now, to see what else we can learn about it from the scriptures.

1. Read Romans 15:22-29
 - a. Where is Paul going first, before coming to Rome?

 - b. What physical need is Paul meeting by going to this city?

 - c. What is the spiritual motivation behind this financial offering?

2. Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
 - a. What instructions does Paul give the Corinthian church in this earlier letter?

 - b. How does he foresee the collection being delivered according to these verses?

 - c. Review what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:1-5 in light of 1 Corinthians 16:2.
 - i. Do you think the Corinthians have been following Paul's instructions to set aside money every week in the intervening time between the 2 letters? What do you base your impressions on?

 - ii. In 1 Corinthians 16:4, it seemed that Paul wasn't sure if he was going to accompany the gift to Jerusalem. What has he decided since the earlier letter was written?

They¹ have freely scattered their gifts to the poor - Part 1. In 2 Corinthians 9:9, Paul quotes from Psalm 112:9. As he quotes this psalm, he is reminding the Corinthians of broader biblical teaching regarding how righteous people act. In order to understand what he is arguing, read the psalm and answer the questions below.

3. Read Psalm 112:1-10

- a. What is the core truth about righteous people according to verses 1 and 7?

- b. What else do we learn about their character in verses 4-5?
 - i. How does Psalm 112:4-5 illuminate Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11?

 - ii. Do these attitudes mark you? How do these verses convict or challenge you?

- c. What are the blessings that accompany righteousness according to this psalm?

- d. Do righteous people experience only good things according to this psalm? What words or phrases would you point to, to validate your answer to this question?

- e. When will righteous people look in triumph on their foes? What does this mean?

- f. How is their final state different from that of wicked people?

¹ In an effort to make the words of scripture applicable to both men and women, the NIV translation changes the pronouns in Psalm 112:9 from singular (he / his gifts / his righteousness) to plural (they / their gifts / their righteousness). If you do all your study using the NIV translation you won't notice any difference between the texts, but if you use the ESV or other translations to do your Whole Bible Connections, you will see that the ESV uses singular pronouns in both 2 Corinthians 9:6 and Psalm 112:9. This initially confused us (!), so we thought we'd provide you with a brief explanation of the rationale in case you notice the difference.

They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor - Part 2. The Bible contains many passages which teach on generosity and giving. Read the following texts for more teaching on this topic.

4. Read Deuteronomy 15:1-11 for context, and then focus on verses 7-11.
 - a. What attitudes are condemned in these verses?

 - b. What attitudes are commended in these verses?

5. Read Acts 4:32-37
 - a. What attitudes mark the believers in this passage?

 - b. What actions mark the believers in this passage?

 - c. How is God at work in their community?
 - i. What correlation is there between the narrative in Acts 4:33-34, and Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 8:13-15 (last week's lesson) and 2 Corinthians 9:8-11?

6. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19
 - a. What are the rich commanded not to do in these verses? Why?

 - b. What are the rich commanded to do in these verses? Why?

7. Putting together what you have learned from Psalm 112, Deuteronomy 15, Acts 4, 1 Timothy 6 and 2 Corinthians 9, what do you need to believe about God in order to become a generous person?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 14

Paul Confronts: Boasting

2
Corinthians

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
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2 Corinthians 10:1-18

¹ By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away!

² I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.

On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

⁶ And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

⁷ You are judging by appearances.

If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do.

⁸ So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

⁹ I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters.

¹⁰ For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.”

¹¹ Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves.

When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

¹⁴ We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

¹⁵ Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others.

Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand,

¹⁶ so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.

For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory.

¹⁷ But, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

¹⁸ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Lesson 14: Paul Confronts: Boasting

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups.
 - a. Paul (all references to "I" refer to Paul alone)
 - i. What is Paul's tone throughout this chapter?
 1. How does this compare with what we just observed in 2 Corinthians 8-9?
 - ii. Who gave Paul his authority and for what was it given?
 - iii. What do other people say about his letters? What does he say about his letters?
 - b. Paul/Timothy (all references to "we and us" refer to Paul and Timothy)
 - i. What things will they NOT do?
 - ii. What things WILL they do?
 - c. Paul's opponents (most references to "some people/such people/themselves/they" refer to Paul's opponents)
 - i. Why are they opposing Paul? How do they view him?
 - ii. Why does Paul say they are not wise?

- d. The Corinthians (all references to “you/your” refer to the Corinthians)
 - i. What does he ask of the Corinthians? (What is he preparing them for?)

 - ii. What do you learn about Paul’s ministry to the Corinthians?

- e. Christ/Lord
 - i. What characteristics of Christ does Paul appeal to in his defence? Why do you suppose he mentions these attributes?

 - ii. What do you learn about a Christian’s relationship to Jesus in this text?

- f. God the Father

10. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!

11. **What** are the “strongholds” that Paul and Timothy are demolishing? ²

- a. How do they wage war against these “strongholds”? What are their weapons like?

- b. What three actions are involved in demolishing strongholds?
 - i. What types of arguments, thoughts, or acts of disobedience might be strongholds in your own life?

² A “stronghold” is a word used by lots of people to talk about many different things when they talk about spiritual warfare. It’s important for us to define it, in context, using the ideas put forward by biblical writers. What are “strongholds” according to Paul in this chapter?

12. **What** does Paul teach about proper boasting in this passage?

- a. **Where** do Paul and Timothy confine their boasting? Why? (vs 13-16)
- b. **What** would he say is inappropriate boasting?
- c. **Who** does Paul say is approved?
 - i. Do you tend to measure yourself against yourself (v 12) and commend yourself (v 18) or do you measure yourself against God's standards and God's call on your life?
 - ii. How important is it for you to be commended by the Lord?

13. **Where** does Paul hope to expand his ministry? Look at a map to help you visualize. (So far Paul's ministry has been expanding from east to west.)

14. **Why** does Paul hope the Corinthians' faith continues to grow?

- a. What does this mean?

15. **How** would you summarize each section of this text? What is the flow of thought?

- a. 2 Corinthians 10:1-11
- b. 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

16. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

By the humility and gentleness of Christ. Paul appeals to the gentle and humble (some translations say “meek”) character of Christ as he makes his defense against his proud, boastful opponents who say he is timid, weak, and unimpressive. Look up the following passages to understand what characteristics are prized by God in His people.

1. Read Matthew 11:25-30.
 - a. Who does the Father reveal things to?

 - b. Who/what kind of people does the Lord call to Himself?

 - c. How does Jesus describe Himself?
 - i. How does He describe His yoke?

2. Read John 13:1-17. How does Jesus show His gentleness and humility in this passage?
 - a. What knowledge and emotions motivate Jesus in this story? (v 1-3)

 - b. What is He teaching his disciples through His example?

3. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. How do we see Jesus’ humility and gentleness in this passage and why is that important for us?

4. Read Philippians 2:1-8. The mindset of Christ should characterize our relationships with one another. What does this passage teach us about what this mindset looks like?

5. How is the Spirit nudging you through these passages, to be more like Jesus?

4. How do these passages help you understand the war that Paul is waging in Corinth (2 Cor. 10:1-6)?
 - a. The phrase “taking thoughts captive” is commonly quoted in Christian circles. From the context of where it is found in 2 Corinthians 10, and the help of these other passages, what do you think it means? What thoughts need to be taken captive? And what does it mean to make them obedient to Christ?

5. How do these passages challenge or encourage you as you think about the spiritual battle you are facing each day?

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord. Paul quotes from Jeremiah 9 in this passage to teach about boasting. Jeremiah wrote these verses in the context of a lament over God’s judgement on Jerusalem.

1. Read Jeremiah 9:11-22 for context, and then focus on 9:23-24.
 - a. Why is Israel being punished by God according to this text (v 13-14)

 - b. What are people NOT supposed to boast in?

 - c. Instead, what ARE people to boast in?

 - d. Why do you think Paul quotes these verses in his letter? How do they connect to 10:18?

2. Paul quoted this passage in a previous letter to the Corinthians. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. How does Paul use the Jeremiah passage in this context?

Paul will continue this theme of boasting in the next few lessons so take note of what you learn as you continue on, and we will wrap this idea up in Lesson 17.

Reflection:

- Adoration
- Confession
- Supplication

Lesson 15

Paul Confronts: Super Apostles

2
Corinthians

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 4** Work through Whole Bible Connections.
- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

¹ I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness.

Yes, please put up with me!

² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy.

I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

⁴ For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

⁵ I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."

⁶ I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge.

We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

⁷ Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?

⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.

⁹ And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed.

I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.

¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine.

¹¹ Why?

Because I do not love you?

God knows I do!

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.

¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness.

Their end will be what their actions deserve.

2 Corinthians 11:1-15

Lesson 15: Paul Confronts: Super Apostles

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups?
 - a. Paul (all references to 'I' refer to Paul alone)
 - i. **What** emotions do you observe that Paul is feeling? (Especially how does he feel towards the Corinthians?)
 - ii. **What** is his big concern for the Corinthians?
 - iii. **How** did he act while with the Corinthians according to this text?
 - b. The Corinthians (all references to 'you/your' refer to the Corinthians)
 - i. **What** three things are they putting up with in verse 4?
 - ii. **What** is their issue with Paul in vs 5-6?
 1. **What** about in vs 7-11?
 2. **What** does their critique of Paul indicate about their culture/society?
 - c. False/Super Apostles (references to 'they/those/his servants/someone/some people' etc)
 - i. **What** are they doing/teaching to the Corinthians? (v 1-11)
 - ii. **What** seems to be important to them? (v 1-11)

iii. **How** does Paul describe them in versus 12-15?

1. **How** are they getting away with their actions?
2. **Who** do they work for?
3. **What** will be their end?

d. Jesus/Christ

2. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!
3. **What** illustration does Paul use to describe his relationship to the Corinthians and their relationship to Christ?
 - a. Why does Paul use this imagery? How does it help to clarify his emotions and his concern for the Corinthians?
4. **What** is Paul boasting of in verse 10?
 - a. **Why** won't he stop? (verse 11)
5. **Where/who** did Paul receive support from? Look at the map in the beginning of your book and locate where this region is in relation to Corinth. Refer back to 2 Cor 8:1-5 and 9:1-5 for a reminder of how Paul has previously described people from this region.

6. **How** do Satan and His servants deceive people? What do they “masquerade” as?
 - a. What kind of deceptive tactics does Satan use today to try to lead you astray from pure and sincere devotion to Christ?
 - b. In what way(s) do you perceive Satan masquerading as an angel of light in our culture today? How is he deceiving people you know?

7. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 11:1-4

 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:5-11

 - c. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

8. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. Paul uses betrothal imagery in this section to explain his fatherly responsibility over the Corinthian church as he prepares them to meet Jesus one day. Look up the following Old Testament passages to understand the Jewish concept of betrothal and marriage and how it was connected to God's relationship to his covenant people.

1. Read Deuteronomy 22:13-21. This is the Old Testament Law regarding betrothal, marriage, and a father's role.
 - a. What do you learn about the responsibility of the father?

 - b. How serious was adultery during the "betrothal" (the period when you were "promised" to someone)? What was the expectation of purity?

 - c. How does the Law shed light on 2 Corinthians 11:2?

2. Read Hosea 2:2-23 (especially focus on 16-20). This is one example of God using the imagery of betrothal and marriage to explain his love and relationship with his covenant people.
 - a. What was Israel's problem? (2-8)

 - b. What was God's response? (9-13)

 - c. What is their future hope? (16-20)

3. Placing himself in the fatherly role in this betrothal imagery, Paul says he has "godly jealousy". Read Deuteronomy 6:13-25. Why does God call himself jealous?
 - a. Read Jeremiah 3:6-10 to see how well Israel did at following the law.

4. How do these illustrations of betrothal, marriage, and jealousy help you understand the nature of our relationship to God?
 - a. How do they help you understand Paul's concern for the Corinthians?

I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray... Paul is equating the deception of the false apostles with the very first deception that caused the fall of humanity in Genesis. Read the following passages to help you understand why Paul is so concerned about what is going on in the Corinthian church.

1. Read Genesis 3:1-7.
 - a. How is the serpent described?

 - b. What tactics did he use to deceive Eve?

 - c. Why did his tactics they work?

 - d. What was the result of Eve being led astray? (See also Genesis 3:8-24, Romans 5:12-19)

Paul understands that the Corinthians are in a battle that involves the **mind**. Look up the following passages to see the emphasis Paul places on the mind in the journey of standing firm in the faith.

2. Read Ephesians 4:11-24 and notice how often Paul refers to thinking, understanding, learning, and the mind.
 - a. What does it look like to be an infant or immature in the faith?

- i. Based on what Paul says in Ephesians 4:14-15, and what he says in 2 Corinthians 11:4, how would he diagnosis the Corinthian church? Do you think Paul would say the Corinthians are infants or mature?

- ii. How would Paul diagnose you? How easily are you tossed back & forth by winds of doctrine?

 - b. Paul insists they no longer live as the Gentiles. How does he describe what NOT to do?

 - c. What is the way of life they learned and were taught?
3. Earlier in this letter, Paul indicated that the mind plays a major part in becoming a Christian or not. Read 2 Corinthians 3:12-16 and 4:1-6. What did Paul say about the battle for the mind in these verses?
4. Summary: If you pull together these four passages - Genesis 3:1-7, Ephesians 4:11-24, 2 Corinthians 3:12-16, 4:1-6 - and then refer back to 2 Corinthians 11:1-5, why is Paul so concerned that the Corinthians think rightly? What does incorrect thinking about God and his commands lead to?
- a. What does **correct** thinking about God and his commands lead to?

If someone comes to you and preaches...a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. Paul has no patience for a false gospel or for people who tolerate false teaching.

- 1. Read Galatians 1:3-12.
 - a. How does Paul summarize the true gospel in verse 3-5?

 - b. What is happening in the Galatian church?

 - c. What does Paul say about those who are teaching the different gospel?

- d. What makes Paul's gospel unique and true? (See Galatians 2:1-10 as well.)
2. Read 1 Timothy 6:3-10 where Paul gives instructions to Timothy (who is pastoring a church in Ephesus).
 - a. How does Paul describe those who do not agree to the sound instruction of Jesus?
 - i. What motivates these teachers?
 - b. What does Paul remind Timothy about contentment?
 - i. Why does Paul warn Timothy about money and the desire to get rich? What happens to people who fixate on money?
 - ii. How does Paul's teaching about money in 1 Timothy 3:6-10 connect to his confrontation with the false apostles in 2 Corinthians 11? What is at stake?
 3. Based on these texts and what we've studied so far in 2 Corinthians 10 and 11, why is Paul concerned that the Corinthians are "putting up with" false apostles and false teaching?
 - a. What should they be doing instead?
 4. Do you think Paul would be worried about our popular Christian culture/teaching today? Think about your own experience with Christian materials and teachers: the books you have read, the podcasts you listen to, the websites you browse, the music in your playlists. Does it reflect and teach the one, true gospel? Or are you putting up with a different Jesus/spirit/gospel?
 - a. *If you want to grow in your ability to discern the trustworthiness of Christian resources, check out these resources below:*
 - i. <https://northview.org/2-corinthians-workbook-resources/>
 - ii. *Podcast describing how to use the discernment grid:*
<http://storage.northview.org.s3.amazonaws.com/bonus/73bonus.mp3>

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 16

Paul Confronts: The Fool (Part 1)

2
Corinthians

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 4** Work through Whole Bible Connections.
- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 11:16-29

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool.

But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.

¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.

¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast.

¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!

²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face.

²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about.

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I.

Are they Israelites? So am I.

Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.

²³ Are they servants of Christ?

(I am out of my mind to talk like this.)

I am more.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move.

I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.

²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak?

Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

2 Corinthians 11:16-29

Lesson 16: Paul Confronts: The Fool (Part 1)

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups.
 - a. Paul (all references to 'I/me' refer to Paul alone)
 - i. What does Paul NOT want to be thought of as?
 1. How do you make sense of these opposite requests?
 - ii. What does Paul ask the Corinthians to tolerate him as?
 1. How does Paul feel about participating in the boasting? How do you know?
 - iii. How does Paul feel about participating in the boasting? How do you know?
 1. Why does Paul decide to participate in boasting anyways?
 - iv. Compare Paul's request to be tolerated as a fool with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4. What are the similarities in these passages as Paul leads up to his foolish boast?
 - b. The fool (all references to as 'anyone/they' are referring to the fools)
 - i. How are they treating the Corinthians?
 1. What is Paul's comeback?
 - ii. What do the fools boast about according to verse 22?
 1. What is Paul's comeback?

iii. What do the fools claim to be in verse 23?

1. What is Paul's comeback (and how does he prove it)?

iv. Who are these "fools" Paul is referring to? (See 2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

c. The Corinthians (all references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians)

i. What are they tolerating/putting up with?

1. Why do you think they are putting up with these things?

2. **What** is Paul's tone in this text? (How does he indicate his tone?)

3. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!

4. **What** do you learn about boasting in this text?

5. In verses 23-29 Paul lists hardships and sufferings as proof of his superior service to Christ.

a. What are the four general types of suffering he lists in verse 23?

b. What are the four specific near death experiences he lists in verses 24-25?

c. What kinds of dangers did Paul face while on ministry journeys (verse 26)?

- d. What kinds of physical deprivations has he faced according to verse 27?
- e. What kind of internal pressures/suffering has he faced according to verses 28-29?

- i. Why does Paul willingly endure such hardships and danger?
- ii. Compare your personal commitment to the gospel with that of the Apostle Paul. How is the Holy Spirit convicting or challenging you as you read these verses?

6. **How** does Paul feel when someone else is weak or led into sin?

- a. The NIV uses the phrase “inwardly burn”, which is a bit strange. Look this up in some other translations (ESV, NLT, NASB) to get an idea of what Paul is feeling here.
- b. Why do you think Paul feels these emotions for those in the churches?

7. **How** would you summarize each section of this text? What is the flow of thought?

- a. 2 Corinthians 11:16-21a
- b. 2 Corinthians 11:21a-29

8. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

Let no one take me for a fool. Biblically, the idea of a fool is very negative. Garland defines a fool as Paul uses it in this passage as “someone who cannot evaluate himself soberly”.

1. How would you define “foolish” or “a fool”? Look up the definition in a dictionary as well.

2. Look up the following passages and list what characterizes a fool.

Proverbs 10:1, 8, 10	
Proverbs 10:23	
Psalms 53:1	
Psalms 74:18-23	
Ecclesiastes 7:4-9	
Matthew 7: 24-27	
Ephesians 5:15-20	

3. With this biblical teaching in mind, skim over 2 Corinthians 10:1-11:39 (the last three lessons) again. Which characteristics of biblical “fools” show up in Paul’s attack against the false apostles?

You even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. Paul is aghast that the Corinthians are listening to these false apostles who are boastful, arrogant, and actually abusing them! He calls the false apostles “fools” but also seems to be implying that the Corinthians are fools because they put up with them! Look up the following passages to learn about what true leaders are supposed to act like.

1. Read Titus 1:5-16 . In this text Paul instructs Titus about the leadership qualities he should look for in others, while he is ministering at a church in Crete.
 - a. What are the main expectations that Paul lists for those who pastor/oversee/ lead in the church? (v 5-9)

- b. How does Paul describe the “rebellious men”?
 - i. Their character?

 - ii. Their teaching?

 - b. What does Paul say must be done to these rebellious men?
6. In Matthew 23:13-28 Jesus declares a series of woes against the religious leaders of Israel.
- a. What kinds of things did he rebuke them for?

 - b. What does this reveal about what the character and actions of a person called into ministry leadership should look like?
7. Read James 3:13-18.
- a. How does someone show true wisdom and understanding?

 - b. What does earthly “wisdom” look like?

 - c. How is heavenly wisdom described?
8. How do the words in Titus, Matthew, and James challenge you? When you are placed in a leadership setting, what kind of characteristics do you lead with? What do you need to work on?

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Paul has already written about his suffering twice earlier in this letter, but he goes into even greater detail in this section. He uses his sufferings as a reason for boasting! Let's look at some other examples in Scripture of suffering for the gospel.

1. Read Matthew 10:16-23
 - a. What instructions did Jesus give to His disciples when He sent them out?

 - b. What did He warn them would happen?

 - c. Why did He tell them not to worry?

 - d. Now read Matthew 10:26-31. Why do they not need to be afraid of those who can kill the body?

2. Read Romans 5:1-5.
 - a. Why does Paul say we should glory in suffering?

 - b. In a culture that views weakness as shameful, why does Paul say we are not put to shame?

3. Romans 8 is a beautiful chapter of encouragement for the believer. Read the following verses and note how they could encourage you during a time of suffering.
 - a. 8:28-30 (What do we know about God's sovereignty?)

 - b. 8:31-37 (What do we conquer through Christ?)

 - c. 8:38-39 (What cannot separate us from Jesus' love?)

4. How is your heart encouraged by these passages in Matthew and Romans? How can you glorify God in your current suffering, or what cares do you need to lay before Him and trust Him with?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 17

Paul Confronts: The Fool (Part 2)

Corinthians
2

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 4** Work through Whole Bible Connections.
- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 11:30-12:13

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.

³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.

³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

12 ¹ I must go on boasting.

Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.

² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven.

Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.

³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—

⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.

⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth.

But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations.

Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties.

For when I am weak, then I am strong.

¹¹ I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it.

I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing.

¹² I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.

¹³ How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you?

Forgive me this wrong!

2 Corinthians 11:30-12:13

Lesson 17: Paul Confronts: The Fool - Part 2

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups.
 - a. Paul (all references to 'I/me' refer to Paul alone)
 - i. **What** are the weaknesses that he describes/lists in this passage?
 - ii. **How** does he feel about his weaknesses?
 - iii. **What** is Paul's final defence of himself in this section? How does he sum up his ministry?
 - b. "A man in Christ"
 - i. **What** happened to this man?
 - ii. **When** did it happen?
 - iii. **Where** did it happen?
 - iv. **What** did he see/hear?
 - v. Commentators are divided about **who** they think this "man in Christ" is. (Suggestions include: a ministry partner of Paul, a parody referring to Paul's opponents, or Paul himself). Who do you think "man in Christ" is? What brought you to that conclusion?
 - c. Jesus/the Lord

- d. The Corinthians (most the references to 'you' refer to the Corinthians - other than 12:9)
 - i. **What** is Paul's tone in this section toward them?

 - ii. **What** does Paul accuse them of?

 - iii. **What** did they accuse Paul of?

 - e. God/the Father
 - i. What is Paul's attitude towards God in this passage? What does he say about Him?

 - ii. **What** does "God know" in this passage?

 - iii. **Why** do you think Paul appeals to God knowing these things?
2. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!
3. **What** do we learn about boasting in this passage?
- a. Why MUST Paul boast?

 - b. What does Paul boast about? Why?

 - c. When is boasting appropriate/not foolish?
4. **What** was Paul given?
- a. Why was it given to him? (there are several reasons explained or alluded to)

 - b. Who gave it to him?

5. **How** did Paul react to being given the “thorn in his flesh” and what does this indicate about the severity of this “thorn”?
 - a. What was the Lord teaching Paul through this suffering?
 - i. What is your response to weaknesses or sufferings that will not seem to go away?
 - ii. How can you delight in your own weakness and rely on the sufficiency of God’s grace in the circumstances you are facing today?
6. **What** are some of the “marks of a true apostle”?
7. **Why** does Paul share the story about his escape from Damascus? (Look up Acts 9:19b-30 for the account of this story.)
8. **Why** did Paul make a fool of himself? (think back through the last three lessons for insights as well)
9. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 11:30-33
 - b. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
 - c. 2 Corinthians 12:11-13
10. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weaknesses. In this passage Paul finally finishes with his boasting. Summarize what we have learned about boasting throughout 2 Corinthians.

2 Corinthians Reference	What we learn about boasting. (Appropriate boasting, inappropriate boasting, what Paul boasts about or won't boast about.)
1:12-14	
7:13-15, 9:1-3	
10:7-9, 13-16	
10:17-18	
11:16-23	
11:30, 12:5, 12:9	
12:1	

1. Based on 2 Corinthians, how would you explain the difference between sinful boasting and appropriate boasting?

2. What kind of things does our culture tend to boast about?

3. What could you boast about if you were to boast counter-culturally like Paul?

I will go on to visions and revelations. It is likely that Paul brings this up because the false apostles were using visions and revelations as a topic for boasting. Paul hesitates to share about this vision and does not want to use it to prove his apostleship. Look up the following references that describe visions of heaven. What do you notice about each of these men and their responses to the visions they receive?

1. Isaiah 6:1-8
 - a. What did Isaiah see?

 - b. What was his response?

 - c. What was the purpose/outcome of this vision?

2. Ezekiel 1:1-9, 25-28, 2:1-8
 - a. What did Ezekiel see?

 - b. What was his response?

 - c. What was the purpose/outcome of this vision?

3. Revelation 1:1-20
 - a. What did John see?

 - b. What was his response?

 - c. What was the purpose/outcome of this vision?

4. How might someone find a reason for boasting in visions? (Even Paul said he *could* boast truthfully in his great revelations.)³

5. Based on this small sample and from what Paul writes in 2 Corinthians, why should we be wary of people who boast in their visions and revelations?

For when I am weak, then I am strong. The theme of suffering and weakness has been prominent in this letter and in this chapter Paul comes to his climax as he teaches about God’ sufficient grace in weakness. There are many examples of God using the weak for His glory and purposes.

Person	Their weakness:	How God will use them and to make His power and glory known:
Moses Exodus 3:7-11 Exodus 4:10-12		
Gideon Judges 6:6-16		
David 1 Samuel 17:38-47		
Mary Luke 1:26-38		
Peter Luke 5:1-11		

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:27-29. How is this verse illustrated in the examples listed in the chart above?

2. In what ways do you feel your own weakness today?

3. How do you think God can use you in the midst of your weakness, and make Himself known through your weakness?

³ Please note, these kinds of visions were given to the prophets and writers of the Bible as revelation from God to reveal His will and purpose to mankind. Since we have the completed and authoritative Word of God, we need to be very cautious toward any claims of extra-biblical revelation outside of Scripture today. These claims can quickly lead to cults and false teaching.

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 18

Paul Prepares: The Future Visit

Corinthians
2

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
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- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10

¹⁴ Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you.

After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

¹⁵ So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well.

If I love you more, will you love me less?

¹⁶ Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you.

Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery!

¹⁷ Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent to you?

¹⁸ I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him.

Titus did not exploit you, did he?

Did we not walk in the same footsteps by the same Spirit?

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you?

We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening.

²⁰ For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be.

I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

²¹ I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

¹³¹ This will be my third visit to you.

“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

² I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time.

I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others,

³ since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me.

He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

⁴ For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power.

Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you.

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.

Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

⁶And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.

⁷ Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed.

⁸For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

⁹ We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored.

¹⁰This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10

Lesson 18: Preparations for Paul's Third Visit

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups.

a. Paul (all references to "I/my" refer to Paul alone)

i. What is he ready for?

ii. What will he not be to the Corinthians?

1. Why won't Paul allow himself to burden the Corinthians?

iii. What is the purpose of all that Paul and Timothy do?

iv. What is Paul afraid of finding upon his return to Corinth?

1. List the things Paul fears he will find amongst the Corinthian church.

a. What would you say about your church if people in attendance are known for these characteristics?

b. How would you want your church leaders to handle these issues?

v. What is Paul afraid of experiencing upon his return to Corinth?

vi. How will Paul deal with those who sinned earlier?

- vii. What are the Corinthians demanding from Paul?

- viii. What are Paul and Timothy praying for with respect to the Corinthians?

1. Why do Paul and Timothy pray that the Corinthians will do no wrong?

- ix. What is Paul's purpose for writing this letter to the Corinthians?

b. Titus

- i. What did he *not* do when he was with the Corinthians?

c. The Corinthians (referred to as "you")

- i. What have they been accusing Paul of doing?

- ii. What have they been thinking Paul was writing to them about?

d. Jesus Christ

- i. How is Christ dealing with the Corinthians?

- ii. How was Christ crucified?

- iii. How does Christ live now?

- iv. In whom does Christ dwell?

- 2. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!

- 3. **What** authority does Paul have to speak to the Corinthians with such boldness? **What** does he hope to use his authority to accomplish?

4. **What** actions does Paul call the Corinthians to?
 - a. What is the purpose of the Corinthians self-examination?
 - b. What will “failing the test” reveal about those who fail?
 - c. We’re going to return to the idea of testing yourself in the Whole Bible Connections section, but based on your thoughts at this moment, how would you test yourself to see whether you are in the faith? What would that look like?

5. **How** many witnesses are needed to establish the truth of a testimony?
 - a. What are the “two or three witnesses” that Paul uses to establish his testimony? If you’re not sure, make an educated guess! We’ll return to this idea in Whole Bible Connections.

6. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 12:14-18
 - b. 2 Corinthians 12:19-21
 - c. 2 Corinthians 13:1-4
 - d. 2 Corinthians 13:5-7
 - e. 2 Corinthians 13:8-10

7. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

Everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. Paul's goal as an Apostle of Christ is to make and strengthen disciples.⁴ All Christians are also called to mutual strengthening and edification for the sake of Christ and the Church.

1. Skim Romans 14

a. What is this passage about?

b. How are the Christians called to deal with one another in verse 19?

c. What does it look like in this passage to “make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification?” (Paul gives 3-4 directives in this chapter)

2. Skim 1 Corinthians 14:1-26

a. What is this passage about?

b. When it comes to worship, according to this text, what ought to determine which elements are included in a gathering? (see specifically 14:4, 12, 26)

3. Read Ephesians 4:11-13

a. For what purpose has God given the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers?

b. What is the end goal of this building up that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, do?

⁴ In the passages quoted for this section (Rom 14; 1 Cor 14; Eph 4) the word used for “strengthening” in 2 Cor 12:19 is translated as “build up” or “edify” but in each passage they are all the same word in the Greek text (οικοδομη or οικοδομew, the difference simply being one is a verb and the other a noun). As always, context determines what the best translation would be, but they are all trying to get at the same idea.

I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage... Paul lists many vices that he has confronted the Corinthians about before. Sin issues are not unique to the Corinthian context.

1. Read Galatians 5:19-26.
 - a. What are the vices that Paul lists in this text?

 - b. What is the warning given to those who live according to these sins?

 - c. What does it look like to live by the Spirit?

2. Read Romans 1:18-32.
 - a. What are the vices that Paul lists in this text?

 - b. What is the warning given to those who live according to these sins?

3. Read Colossians 3:1-17.
 - a. What are the vices that Paul lists in this text?

 - b. What are God's chosen people called to "clothe" themselves with?

4. How do these passages help us think through Paul's call to the Corinthians to examine and test themselves? What does it look like to "test yourself"?

"Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." This Old Testament quotation is meant to bolster Paul's testimony who has witnessed sin issues in Corinth twice and is writing, and visiting, a third time.

1. Read Deuteronomy 19:15-21
 - a. What is the purpose of having the testimony of two or three witnesses?

- b. According to Deut 19:19, what is to be done with those who are found guilty of giving false testimony?

- c. How does this help idea help bolster the point Paul is trying to make?

2. Read Matthew 18:15-18

- a. How does the principle of multiple witnesses come to bear in conversations about church discipline?

- b. What is the goal of adding witnesses to conversations about sin within the church?

3. Read 1 Timothy 5:17-20

- a. How does the principle of two or three witnesses come to bear upon leaders in the church?

- b. Why do you think their sins are to be made public (as opposed to those confronted in Matt 18)?
 - i. Our world is constantly shaming people without doing proper diligence of looking for credible witnesses. How does this principle challenge the way we interact with things like hear-say and gossip?

4. Based on all that you have read in this book, is Paul justified in disciplining this church? What sorts of things would he be justified in disciplining them for in addition to what he says in today's text?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 19

Epilogue

2
Corinthians

CHECK LIST

- DAY 1** Read and Mark Scripture passage (highlight people, locations, any mentions of time etc).
- DAY 2** Read Scripture passage and complete "Who and What" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 3** Read Scripture passage and complete "Where, When and Why" sections of LOOK.
- DAY 4** Work through Whole Bible Connections.
- DAY 5** Read Scripture passage & Reflect on what you've learned. Write out your thoughts in the Adoration / Confession / Supplication section.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13:14

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice!

Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace.

And the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss.

¹³ All God's people here send their greetings.

¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13:14

Lesson 19: Epilogue & 2nd Corinthians Study Wrap Up

LOOK at the Text

5 W's & H (Who, What, Where, When, Why, How)

1. **Who** are the main characters in this passage? List everything we learn about the following individuals or groups.
 - a. The Corinthians (referred to as “you” and “brothers and sisters”)
 - i. What commands does Paul give in these verses?
 - ii. Based on these commands, what can you assume about their current status as a church? What do you think their relationships to one another looked like?
 - iii. What does Paul say will be the result of their obedience to these commands?
 - iv. How would you summarize the big idea behind these commands? What do they all have in common?
 - b. All God's People (who are with Paul and Timothy)
2. **What** words are repeated throughout these verses? When anyone repeats words or phrases, they generally want you to pay attention to these ideas!

3. **What** does Paul hope will be with the Corinthians?
- a. **Who** does Paul attribute this grace, love, and fellowship to?⁵
 - b. **How** does this text help us to see that Christian belief in the Trinity is a biblically-based belief?
 - i. The Trinity is a challenging Christian doctrine to understand, yet the biblical text affirms it at multiple points. While it is not mandatory that all Christians are able to expound the doctrine of the Trinity, one cannot be a Christian and reject this fundamental belief. Curious to see other texts that show all three persons of the Trinity? Read Jude 20-21, Luke 3:21-22, and Matthew 28:19-20.
4. **How** would you summarize each section of this text? What is the flow of thought?
- a. 2 Corinthians 13:11
 - b. 2 Corinthians 13:12-13
 - c. 2 Corinthians 13:14
5. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

⁵ While the text attributes each attribute to a specific person of the Trinity (grace to Jesus; love to the Father; and fellowship to the Spirit) it is essential to note that elsewhere there are texts that attribute fellowship to Jesus (1 Cor 1:9), grace to the Father (1 Cor 1:4), and love to Jesus as well (2 Cor 5:14). Theologically, this is because we worship One God who exists eternally as three persons. This One God works inseparably and indivisibly, yet we can still faithfully distinguish the way the persons make their work known. (For example, Paul attributes grace to Jesus, love to the Father, and fellowship to the Spirit, yet it is also true that the Father and Spirit give grace, the Son and Spirit give love, and the Father and Son give fellowship because The Three Persons are One God whose works cannot be divided.)

6. **How** would you summarize the main point of this book? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or do?
7. **How** has studying 2nd Corinthians affected...
- a. Your love for Jesus and willingness to follow him?
 - b. Your love and understanding for the Bible as a whole?
 - c. Your love for God's people (the church)?
 - d. Other aspects of your life?

Whole Bible Connections

For our final section, we will look at the closing of some of Paul's letters which commonly follow similar patterns. Fill in the following chart by looking up the texts and making note of the similarities and differences between the closing in 2 Corinthians 13 and Paul's other letters.

Texts	Commands	Greetings	Blessings
2 Cor 13:11-14			
Romans 16:20-27			
1 Cor 16:19-24			
Philippians 4:4-9; 20-23			
1 Thessalonians 5:12-28			
2 Thessalonians 3:16-18			

What is unique about Paul's final words to Corinth, when you compare them to his final words to the churches in Rome, Philippi and Thessalonica? What does he tell them that he doesn't tell the others?

“Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace.” The Corinthians church has been continually struggling with division, yet Christians are continually called to unity.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.

a. What appears to be one of the root causes of division in the Corinthian church?

b. What does Paul call the Corinthians to in this passage?

2. Read Ephesians 4:1-6

a. What does Paul call the Ephesians to in this text?

b. What is the reason for his call to unity?

3. Read John 17:20-26

a. What does Jesus pray for all those who will believe in Him?

b. What does Jesus say the world will know based on the unity of the church?

4. Our modern world, and church, features widespread division. How might you work to become more united with others within our church, for the sake of our gospel witness to the world?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication