

Hello!

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

This fall we will be studying the first half of Paul's second letter to the Corinthian church (and completing this letter in our winter semester). 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!

Fall Semester Schedule:

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE	MONDAY STUDY	WEDNESDAY STUDY
N/A - Orientation/Intro	September 14	September 16
2 Corinthians 1:1-11	September 21	September 23
2 Corinthians 1:12-2:13	September 28	September 30
2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6	October 5	October 7
2 Corinthians 3:7-18	October 19	October 14
2 Corinthians 4:1-6	October 26	October 21
2 Corinthians 4:7-18	November 2	October 28
2 Corinthians 5:1-10	November 9	November 4
2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2	November 16	November 18
2 Corinthians 6:3-7:4	November 23	November 25
2 Corinthians 7:5-16	November 30	December 2

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

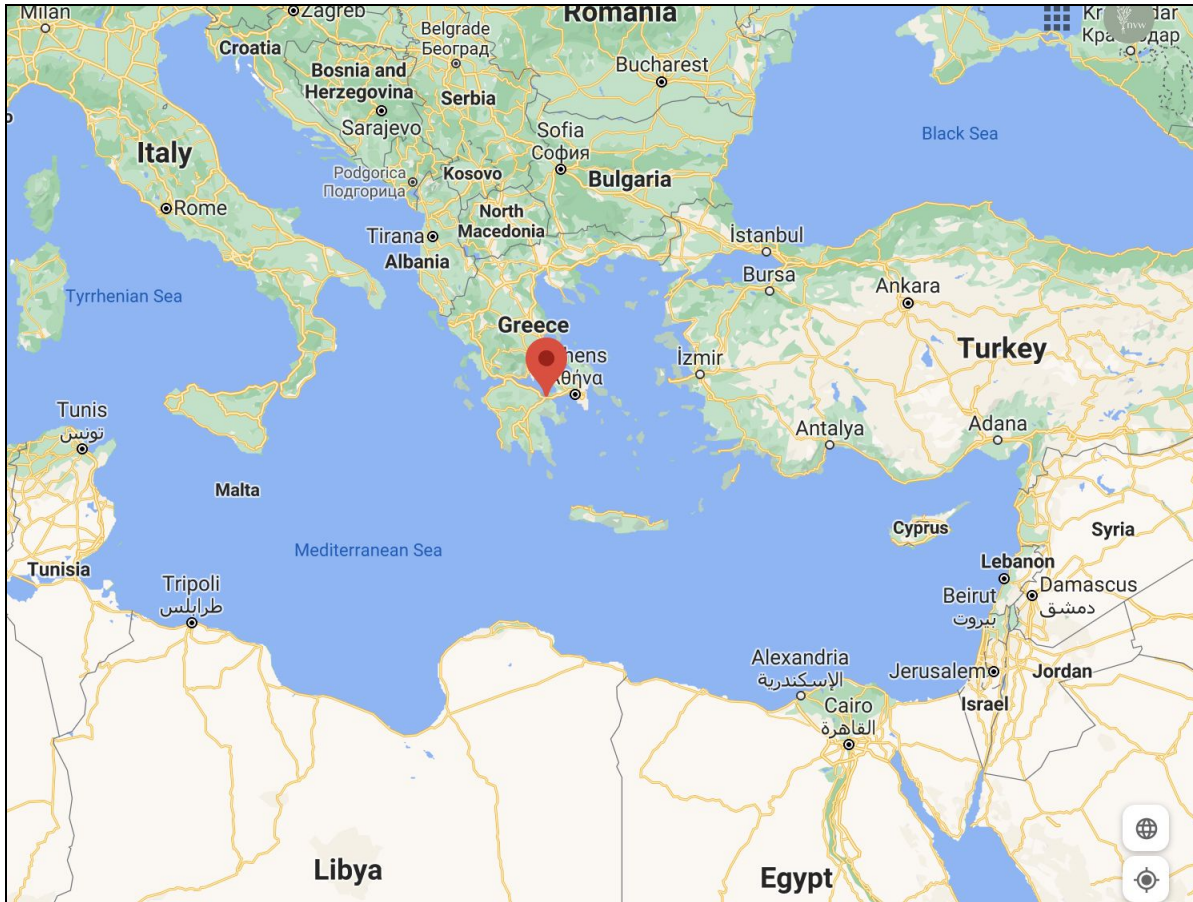
Paul Confronts: The Fool - Part 2

Paul Prepares: The Future Visit

Epilogue



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



Modern Map of the Mediterranean (Source: Google Maps)

2 Corinthians

Lesson 1: Orientation Week

Small Group Discussion:

2 Corinthians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a specific church which is situated in the city of Corinth. What do we need to know about this church before we start studying this book?

- How the church began (Acts 18:1-18)
- Issues in the church (Highlights from Paul's First Letter to this Church - 1 Corinthians)

Part 1: How the Church Began

1. First - Visualize where Corinth is by locating the city on the maps...
 - a. Where is the city of Corinth?
 - i. What was the ancient name for the region in which Corinth was located?
 - ii. What is the modern name for the country in which Corinth is located?
2. Now, read Acts 18:1-18 together in the following sections, and answer the questions together.
 - a. Acts 18:1-4
 - i. What was Paul doing on the weekdays while he was in Corinth?
 - ii. What was Paul doing on the weekends while he was in Corinth?
 - b. Acts 18:5-8
 - i. What kind of responses did people have to Paul's message?

- c. Acts 18:9-11
 - i. Why did Paul keep preaching in Corinth?

 - ii. How long did he stay there?

- d. Acts 18:12-18
 - i. What happened before Paul left?

Part 2: Issues in the Church

1 Corinthians is Paul's earlier letter to this church. In 1 Corinthians we find out a lot about the issues and questions this church is facing. Look at the headings in your Bible before each section of text listed below and take note of what problem or question is identified in each section (see example for 1 Cor 3).

- 1 Corinthians 3 - *Divisions in the church*

- 1 Corinthians 5

- 1 Corinthians 6

- 1 Corinthians 7

- 1 Corinthians 8

- 1 Corinthians 11:2-11:16

- 1 Corinthians 11:17-33

- 1 Corinthians 12

- 1 Corinthians 13

- 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

- 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Large Group Teaching

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE STUDY

- Introduce Our People
 - Staff
 - Group Leaders - In person & online
- Introduce Our Culture
 - Hospitable
 - Grace Based
 - Community Emphasis
 - Open to All

Introduce Our Study

- What happened before 2 Corinthians?
 - AD 33 - Jesus was crucified & resurrected. The Christian mission begins
 - AD 50 (Spring) Paul arrives in Corinth for the 1st time and the Corinthian Church begins to meet
 - AD 51 (Fall) Paul leaves Corinth and ministers in Ephesus
 - AD 52 Paul receives news from Corinth and writes a letter to them (1 Cor 5:9) which they read, but which has not survived
 - AD 53 The Corinthians respond to Paul's letter, and Paul writes back. This letter survived - It is called **1 Corinthians**. Timothy delivers this letter to Corinth on behalf of Paul & discovers that the church is in disarray.
 - AD 54 Paul travels to Corinth to see things for himself and there is some sort of confrontation. Paul calls this the "painful visit" (2 Cor 2:1).

Paul returns to Ephesus. He receives more bad news about the Corinthian church and writes the "painful letter" (2 Cor 2:2-4). Titus delivers this letter to Corinth. This letter also did not survive.
 - AD 54 Paul leaves Ephesus, ministers in Troas and Macedonia, and sends them another letter which survived - **2 Corinthians**.

Sources of Friction between Paul and the Corinthian Church

- Some people are continuing to be involved in sexual immorality and divisiveness.

- False teachers are gaining influence, and discrediting Paul.

Paul's Strategy in Part 1 of 2 Corinthians:

- Greeting: He greets them and explains his change in plans (Lessons 2-3)
- Correction: He explains what true gospel ministry looks like (Lessons 4-8)
- Pleading: Be reconciled to God! (Lesson 9)
Open your hearts to us! (Lesson 10)
- Thanksgiving: The happy result of responding well (Lesson 11)

Lesson 2: Intro and Prologue

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 1:1-11

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.

But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again.

On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Lesson 2: Intro and Prologue

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
 - i. Who is he? (his title / role)
 - b. What has he experienced? (all references to 'we' and 'us' are referring to the experiences of him & likely Timothy who is co-writing this letter)
 - c. The Corinthians
 - i. How does Paul describe them?
 - ii. What does Paul hope for them, and want to inform them of? (all references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians)
 - d. God the Father
 - i. What words are used to describe Him?
 - ii. How does He act in this text? What does Paul say that God the Father has done?

- e. Jesus
 - i. What title is given to Him in this text?

 - ii. What has He experienced?

- 2. **What** are the positive and negative experiences that Paul expected regarding life on this earth, according to 2 Corinthians 1:3-7?
 - a. Do you have the same expectations of life on this earth? Why or why not?

- 3. **What** should the experience of suffering produce?
 - a. Is your suffering producing this attribute in you? Why or why not?

- 4. **What** are the means that God uses to deliver Paul? (hint: v 11 - how are the Corinthians partnering with Paul and with God in his deliverance?)

- 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** is Corinth situated - in what province or region?

- 7. **Where** did Paul experience great troubles - in what province or region?

8. **Why** does God comfort people in their troubles, according to Paul?
- a. How does this challenge or convict you?
9. **Why** does God allow Paul to experience great pressure, beyond his ability to endure?
- a. Do you need to learn the same lesson that Paul did? Is there a specific situation in your life, right now, that is causing you to learn to rely on God instead of yourself?
10. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
- a. 2 Corinthians 1:1-2
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7
 - c. 2 Corinthians 1:8-11
11. **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 Father of Compassion. In this text, Paul describes God as the Father of Compassion. Look up the following verses to see how the motif of God's compassion is developed in other parts of scripture.

1. Read Exodus 3:1-10 and then focus on verses 7-10.
 - a. How aware was God of His people's suffering? How does He describe His sensory perceptions regarding their distress?

 - b. How does God plan to respond to the suffering of His people?
 - i. How does God respond to Paul's suffering in 2 Corinthians 1:1-11?

 - ii. How do these texts encourage or challenge you today?

2. Read Psalm 103 and then focus on verses 13-14.
 - a. How is God's fatherhood expressed?

 - b. Who receives God's compassion?

 - c. Why is He compassionate towards His children? What does He know about people?
 - i. What does God's compassion cause Him to do for His people according to 2 Corinthians 1:1-11? How does this encourage you today?

The suffering of Christ. In this text Paul indicates that Christians share in the sufferings of Christ.

1. What does this mean? We know that Jesus suffered during the events of His death and resurrection, but how else did Jesus suffer?
 - a. Matthew 2:13

 - b. John 7:3-5

 - c. Mark 8:17-21, Matthew 16:8-11

 - d. Matthew 12:14, John 5:18

 - e. Luke 19:41-44

 - f. John 11:28-37

2. At various times in Scripture, we are reminded that Jesus' experience of suffering shows us both how we should respond to suffering, and how we can withstand suffering.
 - a. 1 Peter 2:21-25. What did Jesus experience? How did He endure?

 - b. John 15:18-16:4. What does Jesus say that His followers will experience? How will they endure?

 - c. How do both the "problems" and "solutions" identified in these passages relate to 2 Corinthians 1:1-11?

3. What does Hebrews 4:14-16 confirm about Jesus' posture towards His people as they face suffering and temptations?

On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us. We have so many examples of people within scripture who choose to set their hope on God in the midst of suffering and trials. Depending on how much time you have available, read through one or several of the following psalms to see how people express their hope in God's deliverance. Write down the verse(s) which most encourages you today, in the midst of your own experiences.

1. Psalm 25, Psalm 37, Psalm 40, Psalm 46, Psalm 61-63, Psalm 121

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 3: Paul Explains: Why did He not Come Directly to Corinth?

2
Corinthians

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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 1:12-2:13

¹² Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity.

We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

¹³ For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand.

And I hope that, ¹⁴ as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁵ Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice.

¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.

¹⁷ Was I fickle when I intended to do this?

Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

¹⁸ But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No."

¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

²⁰ For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.

He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

²³ I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth.

²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you.

² For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved?

³ I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice.

I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy.

⁴ For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

⁵ If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely.

⁶ The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient.

⁷ Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

⁹ Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

¹⁰ Anyone you forgive, I also forgive.

And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us.

For we are not unaware of his schemes.

¹² Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me,¹³ I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there.

So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 1:12-2:13

Lesson 3: Paul Explains: Why did he not come directly to Corinth?

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 (almost all the references to 'we' and 'us' are referring to Paul and Timothy)
 - i. What does Paul affirm about his own integrity and his motivations?
 - ii. What does Paul affirm about his travel plans?
 - iii. Why did he change his mind about visiting Corinth?
 - iv. What does he affirm about his feelings towards the church in Corinth?
 - b. The Corinthians (all the references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians)
 - i. What is their posture towards Paul? What seems to be the trouble between them?
 - ii. What commands does Paul give to them? What does he want them to do?
 - c. The one who has caused them grief (a person in their congregation).

- d. God the Father
 - i. How is God the Father described in this text?

 - ii. What has God done according to this text?

- e. Jesus
 - i. What do you learn about Jesus in this text?

- f. Satan
 - i. What do you learn about Satan in this text?

2. **What** is Paul's boast, according to this text?

3. **What** two things is Paul confident of, according to this text?

4. Paul uses courtroom language in this text as he pleads his case to the Corinthians.

a. **What** testifies on his behalf?

b. **Who** does he call as his witness?

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** did Paul plan to travel, and where did he travel instead? (Locate the route mentioned in 1:16, and also the locations mentioned in 2:12-13)

7. **Why** did Paul write to the Corinthians in the past (2:3, 2:4, 2:9)? (He gives 4 reasons in this text.)

8. **Why** did Paul write to the Corinthians instead of visiting them?

9. **Why** is forgiveness necessary, according to this text? (There are two reasons given.)
 - a. How do these reasons challenge you? Is there someone that God is convicting you to forgive so that he/she won't be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow, and so that Satan won't outwit you?

10. **How** do people stand firm, according to this text?

11. **How** would you summarize each section of this text? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 1:12-22

 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4

 - c. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

 - d. 2 Corinthians 2:12-13

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

Whole Bible Connections

Now this is our boast. Paul is going to “boast” a lot in this book (this word comes up over 20 times!) so we need to understand what the Bible says about the difference between sinful and appropriate boasting.

1. Look up the following verses and take note of what it teaches about boasting
 - a. Judges 7:1-3
 - b. 1 Samuel 2:3
 - c. Jeremiah 9:23-24
 - d. Romans 15:14-19 (especially verse 17)
 - e. 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20
 - f. James 4:6
2. How would you summarize the characteristics of sinful boasting in these verses?
3. How would you summarize the characteristics of appropriate boasting in these verses?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-14 again. What is Paul boasting in these verses?
 - a. Who and what could you boast in or boast about, in a way which honors God?

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. In this text, Paul affirms that God is faithful. He reminds the Corinthians that all of God’s promises to the nation of Israel were fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

1. Look up the following verses to see some of the promises Paul is referring to (these are the three primary Old Testament promises, but there are more!)
 - a. Genesis 12:1-7 - What promises does God make to Abraham and how are they “Yes” in Christ?
 - b. 2 Samuel 7:1-16 (especially v 12-16) and Psalm 89:3-4 - What promises does God make to David and how are they “Yes” in Christ?
 - c. Ezekiel 36:24-27 - What promises does God make to the nation of Israel and how are they “Yes” in Christ?
 - d. Consider the fact that Abraham lived roughly 2000 BC, David lived roughly 1000 BC and Ezekiel lived 500-570 BC, and Jesus died in 30 AD. What does the fulfillment of these promises in Christ teach you about God’s faithfulness?
 - e. For what purpose is Paul pointing to God’s faithfulness in this 2 Corinthians passage? What does it have to do with his own defense?

The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead you ought to forgive and comfort him. In this passage, Paul is reflecting on the way that the Corinthian church has disciplined a church member, who now seems repentant.

1. Read the following passages to learn more about church discipline:
 - a. Matthew 18:15-20.
 - i. How should church discipline be conducted?

 - ii. What does it mean to “let someone be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector?”

 - b. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.
 - i. What seems to be the issue in this text? (v 1-2, v 11-12)

 - ii. Who are the Corinthians supposed to judge, according to this text?

 - iii. Who are the Corinthians not supposed to judge, according to this text?

 - iv. What is the purpose of their actions, according to this text?

 - c. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11
 - i. How does Paul correct excesses of church discipline in these verses?

 - ii. How can people be restored?

 - iii. What danger is present to the church if people aren’t willing to forgive those they have disciplined ?

2. How do you think this section about discipline connects to the larger text block which explains Paul’s change of travel plans? How could a contentious situation in the church affect his visits?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 4: Who is Qualified for Ministry?

2
Corinthians

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2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

¹⁵ For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

¹⁶ To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life.

And who is equal to such a task?

¹⁷ Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit.

On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?

Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?

² You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.

³ You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴ Such confidence we have through Christ before God.

⁵ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 2:14-3:6

Lesson 4: Who is Qualified for Ministry?

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 the Father
 - i. What does God the Father do according to this text?

 - b. Jesus Christ
 - i. What do you learn about Jesus in this text?

 - ii. How do believers relate to Jesus Christ? How do we represent Him?

 - c. The Holy Spirit
 - i. What does the Holy Spirit do according to this text?

- d. Paul and Timothy (almost all the references to 'we' and 'us' are referring to Paul and Timothy).
 - i. How are they dependent upon God?

 - ii. How do they minister before God?

 - e. The Corinthians (all the references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians).
 - i. What do you learn about the Corinthians in this text?
2. **What** IS the aroma of Christ? Verse 14 defines what Paul means by the aroma of Christ.

 3. **What** are the various responses identified in this text to the aroma of Christ?

 4. **What** different methods are used to spread the aroma of Christ, according to this text?

 5. **What** does 2 Corinthians 3:1-3 reveal about the relationship between the Corinthians and Paul?

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

7. **Where** does God use Paul and Timothy to spread the aroma of Christ?
- a. How does this challenge you? Are you allowing God to use you to spread the aroma of Christ everywhere?
8. **Where** did the Spirit of God write a letter from Christ?
- a. What does this teach you about our dependence upon the Spirit as we minister in any setting?
9. **Why** do people respond differently to the aroma of Christ?
10. **How** can people be “made equal” to the task of spreading the aroma of Christ everywhere? What answers are found in this text?
11. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
- a. 2 Corinthians 2:14-17
- b. 2 Corinthians 3:1-3
- c. 2 Corinthians 3:4-6
12. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other an aroma that brings life. The Bible repeatedly affirms that the gospel (the message of Jesus) will divide people: some will accept it and some will reject it.

1. Look up the following verses and take note of the various ways that different people at different times present this idea. Also note the different metaphors used to describe people's responses to the 'aroma' of Jesus.
 - a. Luke 2:25-35. When Jesus is dedicated in the temple as an infant, Simeon prophesies regarding his life. How does he describe Jesus' ministry, and the way people will respond?

 - b. John 9:35-41. Here Jesus speaks of various responses to His ministry. What does He say?

 - c. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25. In Paul's previous letter to the Corinthians, he explained this idea as well. What does he say in this text?
 - i. As Paul continues this argument, he gives the Corinthians the "solution" to this problem (in 1 Corinthians 2:10-16). What or who enables people to respond positively to the aroma of Christ according to this text?

 - ii. How / Where does he repeat this idea in today's text? (2 Cor 2:14-3:6)

 - d. 2 Corinthians 4:1-6. Here Paul uses other imagery to make the same point. How does he describe this issue in these verses?
 - i. What or who enables people to respond positively to the aroma of Christ according to this text?

e. 1 Peter 2:4-8. Here Peter quotes the Old Testament to argue that this has always been God's plan. Read this passage and, if you have time, also look up the passages which Peter quotes (Isaiah 28:14-19 (v 16), Psalm 118:15-24 (v 22), Isaiah 8:11-15 (v 14). What metaphor does Peter use to describe Jesus here?

i. How, according to 1 Peter 2:4-8 can people NOT stumble on the cornerstone? What do they need to do?

2. How does this journey through scripture impact you today?

a. If you are a Christian, are you filled with gratitude at God's grace - that His Spirit enabled you to see the truth? Do you recognize that without His intervention, the god of this world would have blinded your eyes?

b. If you have not yet decided to follow Jesus, these verses indicate that you can understand, accept and believe what Jesus has done for you through the work of the Holy Spirit. Are you willing to pray for His help today?

c. If you have friends or family members who don't know Jesus, how does this text cause you to pray?

He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant. Throughout the Bible, God made a series of covenants with His people. A covenant is defined as: a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement (mirriam-webster.com); a formal written agreement between two or more people or groups of people which is recognized in law (collinsdictionary.com). Theologically, it means: an agreement which brings about a relationship of commitment between God and His people (google.com).

1. Look up the following verses to note what you learn about the 'old' covenant and the 'new'.

a. Exodus 24:1-12. What material was this covenant recorded on?

i. How / where does Paul reference Exodus 24:1-12 in today's text? (2 Cor 2:14-3:6)

- b. Jeremiah 31:31-34. How does God describe the new covenant which He will make?

- c. Luke 22:13-23. What action set this new covenant in motion?

- d. 1 Corinthians 11:17-35. How is the Corinthian church (and all churches) supposed to celebrate and remember this new covenant? (hint: what church celebration/sacrament is being described by Paul in this passage)?

- e. Hebrews 9:11-15. What has Jesus accomplished on our behalf? What is Jesus' role in this new covenant?

Christ's Triumph! Colossians 2:13 - 15 describes how Christ triumphed over the powers and authorities of this world. Read and meditate on these verses.

1. If you are a Christian, list all the ways that your life is now different than it was because of Christ's triumph (as described in Colossians 2:13-15)!!
 - a. eg) you were dead in your sins (2:13) & you are now

2. If you have not yet decided to place your trust in Jesus, reflect on what you read in these verses. Do you want to have your sins forgiven? Do you want to have all the 'charges' held against you (every act of rebellion) taken away and nailed to the cross? Do you want to be alive with Christ? If so, pray for Him to save you today!

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 5: What is the Nature of the Ministry? It's Glorious.

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 3:7-18

⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹

If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.

¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.

¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:7-18

Lesson 5: What is the nature of the Ministry? It's Glorious.

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 Israelites

 - b. Moses

 - c. The Holy Spirit
 - i. What is involved in the ministry of the Holy Spirit? What does He cause to happen?

 - ii. What does the text teach about who the Holy Spirit is?

 - d. Paul and Timothy (all the references to 'we' are referring to Paul and Timothy).
 - i. In verse 18, Paul's language of "we all" includes the Corinthians and all those who turn to Jesus throughout all time. What is true about all Christians?

- e. Jesus Christ (Christ, the Lord)
 - i. What does Jesus DO in this text?

- ii. What does this text teach about who Jesus is?

2. **What** do we learn about the two different ‘ministries’ referenced in this text? Note how they are contrasted in the text. (We’ve provided one example below to show you what we mean!)

Ministry that Brought Death
Came with Glory (v 7)

Ministry of the Spirit
Even more glorious (v 8)

3. **What** do we learn about the “veil”?

4. **When** is the **veil** taken away?

- a. What does this teach you about those who are not yet Christians?
- b. How does this knowledge impact your prayers for those who are not yet Christians?
- c. Is your heart and mind “veiled” or “unveiled”? How do you know?

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** is there freedom?
 - a. What does this mean? Freedom from what, do you think?

7. **Why** are Paul and Timothy bold?

8. **How** are Christians transformed into the image of Jesus?
 - a. How does this challenge or encourage you?

9. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 3:7-11

 - b. 2 Corinthians 3:12-18

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

The Ministry that brought death vs the Ministry of Righteousness. In many New Testament letters Paul reflects on the difference between the 'Old Covenant' or 'Old Ministry' (which is mediated by Moses, who communicated the demands of God's Law), and the 'New Covenant' or 'New Ministry' (which is mediated by Jesus, who fulfilled the demands of God's Law). Read the following passages to see how these two ministries are contrasted in scripture.

1. Read Romans 3:19-26.
 - a. What is the purpose of the law?

 - b. How are people made righteous?

2. Read Romans 7:7-12, 21-25.
 - a. What is the purpose of the law?

 - b. What is the "effect" of the law? How do people typically respond to the law because of our sin nature?

 - c. How is the law described by Paul? What adjectives does he use to describe it?

3. Read Romans 8:1-11
 - a. How are we set free from the law of sin and death?
 - i. What is Jesus' role in setting people free?

 - ii. What is the Holy Spirit's role in setting people free?

Both of these mediators (Moses and Jesus) interceded on behalf of people who sinned with varying degrees of success. They were both attempting to 'atone' for the rebellion of people. (*Dictionary.com* defines "atone" as: *to make amends or reparation, as for an offense or a crime, or for an offender*)

4. Read Exodus 32:30-34.

a. How successful was Moses in his attempt to atone for people's sin?

5. Read Hebrews 9:11-15.

a. How successful was Jesus in His attempt to atone for people's sin?

i. Why do you think Jesus succeeded where Moses did not? How is He different from Moses?

The Face of Moses. In this text, Paul is referencing an Old Testament story in order to make a point. It's important to understand the original story in order to understand what he is teaching.

1. Read Exodus 34:27-35

a. Where was Moses as this text begins?

b. How long was he there?

c. Why was Moses' face radiant in this text?

d. How did people respond to the radiance of Moses' face?

e. When did Moses veil his face?

- f. When did Moses unveil his face?
-
2. Bringing this background into our study of 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, how is Moses' experience of God similar to a Christian's experience of God?
 - a. In 2 Corinthians 3:7-18, what comparison does Paul draw between the Israelite's comprehension of God and a non-Christian's comprehension of God?

God's Glory. George Guthrie notes that God's glory is directly related to His mighty acts on behalf of His people (Isaiah 35:1-4, Ezekiel 39:21-29) and to His presence with His people (Exodus 40:34-38, Isaiah 40:1-5)¹.

1. Depending on how much time you have, read one or two of the OT passages listed above and reflect on them.
 - a. What does the passage which you chose teach you about God's glory?

- b. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, Paul states that we are transformed as we 'contemplate the Lord's glory', how could the Holy Spirit use the OT text which you chose to transform you?
 - i. How does this text correct or challenge your head (thoughts)?

 - ii. How does this text correct or challenge your heart (affections)?

 - iii. How does this text correct or challenge your hands (actions)?

¹ Guthrie, G. H. (2015). *2 Corinthians*. (R. W. Yarbrough & R. H. Stein, Eds.) (p. 209). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 6: What is the Nature of the Ministry? It's Truthful.

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 4:1-6

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

Lesson 6: What is the Nature of the Ministry? It's Truthful.

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 the Father

 - b. Paul and Timothy (all the references to 'we' are referring to Paul and Timothy).
 - i. What do they have?

 - ii. What do they NOT do?

 - iii. What do they do?

 - iv. How do Paul's reflections on how he and Timothy conduct their ministry challenge or encourage you? What do you need to learn from them today?
 - c. Jesus Christ (Christ, the Lord)

- d. The god of this age
 - i. What does he do?

 - ii. Who is this referring to (the answer is not in the text - but what do you think?!)?

- e. Unbelievers
 - i. What is their condition while they are unbelievers?

 - ii. How is their condition resolved? How can they come to see the light?

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

3. **What** do we learn about the **veil**? How do these truths relate to what Paul said about the **veil** in the previous lesson?

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

5. **Where** do Paul and Timothy commend themselves to everyone's conscience?

- a. What does this mean?

6. **When** did God say, “Let light shine out of darkness”? (We’ll cover this in the Whole Bible Connections, but think through this now: what other part(s) of the Bible do you think Paul is referring to here?)

7. **Why** do Paul and Timothy not lose heart?

8. **How** do Paul and Timothy view themselves according to this text? What word do they use to describe their role?

9. **How** does anyone become a follower of Jesus according to this text?
 - a. How does this knowledge challenge or encourage you?

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

 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

11. **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 setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. In this text Paul summarizes his approach to ministry, but in other texts he demonstrates more clearly what it looks like to "set forth the truth plainly". Look up the following texts and take note of what authentic, truthful, gospel ministry looks like according to Paul.

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12.
 - a. What did Paul, Silas and Timothy DO when they visited Thessalonica?

 - b. What did Paul, Silas and Timothy NOT do when they visited Thessalonica?

 - c. A variety of different family images are used to describe the relationship between Paul/Silas/Timothy and the church in Thessalonica. What family images do you see?

 - d. What do these family concepts demonstrate about the nature of the relationship and between the apostles and the church?

2. Read Acts 20:13-38. In this text, Paul is saying farewell to the elders of the Ephesian church.
 - a. How does he summarize his ministry among them?

 - b. What does he hope in, as he leaves them? What will protect or guide them in the future (Acts 20:32)?

 - c. What is the nature of the relationship between Paul and this church? How do they seem to feel about each other?

- i. How do the examples of Paul/Silas/Timothy (as described in 1 Thessalonians & Acts) challenge or encourage you today as you think about the people you may be discipling at Bible Study, in your families or your neighbourhoods? How may the Spirit be prompting you to change the way you serve or relate to others?

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers. Who is the god of this age? What does he do? How much power does he have? Read the following texts and record what you observe.

1. Luke 22:31-32

2. John 12:27-31

3. John 14:28-31

4. John 16:7-11

5. 1 Peter 5:8-9

In light of these verses, we need to be reminded of the good news of the gospel! What do we learn in these texts about our status, if we are “in Christ”.

6. Galatians 1:3-5

7. Colossians 1:13-14

8. Romans 16:17-20

- a. If you believe in Jesus, spend time thanking Him for the fact that He “made his light shine in your heart to give [you] the light of the knowledge of God’s truth”
- b. If you do not yet see the light of the gospel, ask God to shine His light in your heart.

“Let light shine out of darkness.” Commentators suggest that Paul can be referring to two Old Testament texts in this verse.

1. Read Genesis 1:1-3.
 - a. What is the context of God’s words in this text? What is He doing as He is speaking about light shining out of the darkness?
 - b. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-17. What does Paul say has happened as a result of people being ‘in Christ’?
2. Read Isaiah 9:1-7. In this passage, Isaiah was speaking words of hope to Israel in the midst of national darkness.
 - a. Who was Isaiah referencing as he spoke about the coming light?
 - b. When did this light shine in the darkness? (When was this prophecy fulfilled?)

God ... made his light to shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Jesus Christ. When Paul speaks about the minds of unbelievers being veiled, and of the necessity for God to shine His light into their hearts, he is speaking from personal experience.

1. Read Acts 26:1-32. In this text Paul describes his life before and after God shone His light in his heart.
 - a. What did he do / think before he encountered Jesus?
 - b. How does he describe what happened to change his mind?
 - c. How does he describe the ministry that Jesus gave to him? What did Jesus tell him that he would do?
 - d. How do the responses of Festus and King Agrippa validate what Paul is teaching in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4?
 - i. Are there people in your life who respond to the gospel in a similar manner as Festus and King Agrippa? Spend some time praying for them right now, asking God to make his light shine in their hearts to give them the knowledge of God’s glory.

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 7: What is the Nature of the Ministry? It Involves Suffering.

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 4:7-18

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."

Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak,¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.

¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart.

Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

Lesson 7: What is the Nature of the Ministry? It Involves Suffering.

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 and Timothy (all the references to 'we' are referring to Paul and Timothy).

i. What are they experiencing as a result of their ministry?

1. Are you experiencing any of these situations as you minister to people?
Circle the one(s) you are experiencing? What encourages or comforts you about the "but not" which corresponds to your experience?

ii. What do they have?

iii. What do they do?

iv. What do they know?

b. God the Father

c. Jesus

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

2. **What** is the treasure Paul is talking about in 4:7? Look back to last week's lesson to see what he may be referring to when he says we have "this" treasure.

3. **Where** is "this treasure" stored? What do you think this means? Why do you think Paul uses this image?

4. **Why** is this treasure in jars of clay?

5. **What** contrasts do you see in this text? Paul is stringing together a lot of opposite ideas, list them here.

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

7. **Why** do Paul and Timothy carry around in their body the death of Jesus, and give themselves over to death for Jesus' sake?

8. **Why** do they speak?

9. **Why** do they not lose heart?

10. **How** do they not lose heart?

11. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:13-15

 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

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

Whole Bible Connections

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. As Christians, we often desire to share the message of the gospel from a position of strength. We want to get everything right and show people the way to Jesus through our success stories and our well-thought out arguments, and yet Paul reminds us in this text that God's priorities are different. He wants to use us in our weakness. He wants people around us to see that we are fragile and ordinary so that they will know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that God is at work in our lives. Look up the following texts to see how this idea is developed within Scripture.

1. Read Exodus 5:22 - 6:8. Before this text, God asked Moses to return to Egypt to deliver the people of Israel from slavery. Moses finally obeyed and announced God's intentions to His people, but things got worse instead of better. As you read, look for God's answer to Moses' questions.
 - a. Why did God bring trouble on the people according to this text?

2. Read Deuteronomy 8:1-18. In this passage, Moses is explaining God's purposes to the people of Israel.
 - a. Why did God cause the nation of Israel to experience the hardship of wandering in the wilderness? (v 1-5)

 - b. What is the danger of prosperity and 'having it all together' according to this text? (v 10-18)

3. Read Judges 7:1-8. This passage recounts a story of God sending His people into battle against the Midianites.
 - a. How many people left Gideon's army in these 8 verses?

 - b. Why did God want his army to be so greatly reduced in number?

4. 2 Corinthians 12:6-10. Later in our study of 2 Corinthians, Paul will expand on the idea of our fragility and ordinariness once again. Read this text and answer the questions below.
 - a. Why was Paul given a “thorn in the flesh”?

 - b. Why does Paul now rejoice in his own weakness?

5. With the passages in Exodus, Deuteronomy, Judges and 2 Corinthians in mind, read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 again.
 - a. Are you experiencing situations right now which remind you that you are a ‘jar of clay’: that you are weak and fragile and ordinary, rather than powerful or self-sufficient?

 - b. How do you think God can use your weakness in the midst of these situations to display His all-surpassing power to others?
 - i. Stop and spend some time praying that the life of Jesus would be revealed to others as a result of your struggles (v 10-12).

It is written: “I believed; therefore I have spoken.” Since we have that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak. In 2 Corinthians 4:13, Paul quotes Psalm 116:10 but by doing so, he is not only reminding his readers of this specific verse, but about the message of the whole psalm. Read all of Psalm 116 and answer the questions below..

1. What is the psalmist experiencing? Psalm 116:1-6
 - a. How do the experiences of the Psalmist in these verses parallel Paul’s experiences in 2 Corinthians 4:7-12?

2. Focus on the verse he quotes: Psalm 116:10. What words does the Psalmist say when he speaks?

- a. The Psalmist is telling us that he believed (ESV) or trusted (NIV) in the midst of his affliction. He spoke words of faith, while fully recognizing that he was in a tough spot. Paul says that he and Timothy have that same spirit of faith, and therefore “believe” and “speak” even when they recognize they are greatly afflicted. How is this a challenge or encouragement to you today?

3. Read Psalm 116:13. What is the Psalmist placing his trust in?

- a. Read 2 Corinthians 4:14. What is Paul placing his trust in?
- b. How does thinking about the truths of Psalm 116 and 2 Corinthians 4:14 help you to believe and trust God in the midst of trials you may be facing as you seek to faithfully serve God?

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.”

1. Read Isaiah 40:28-31

- a. How can we be inwardly renewed day by day?

- b. How does this challenge or encourage you today? What can you do today, or this week, in order to renew your strength?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 8: What Sustains the Ministry? A Future Hope.

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 5:1-10

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, ³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵ Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight.

⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

2. **What** is Paul referring to when he talks about the “earthly tent”?

3. **What** is Paul referring to when he talks about the “eternal house”?

4. **What** are the differences between the “earthly tent” and the “eternal house”? How are they each described?

5. **What** contrasts do you see in this text? Paul is stringing together a lot of opposite ideas, list them here.

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

7. **Where** is our eternal house?

8. **Where** must we all appear? **Why**?

9. **Why** do Paul and Timothy “groan”?

10. **Why** are Paul and Timothy confident?

- a. How does their attitude encourage or challenge you?

11. **Why** do they make it their goal to please Jesus?

- a. Would you say that it is your goal to please Jesus? Why or why not?
- b. If you can't honestly say that this is your goal, what practical steps could you take to make this your goal?

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

- a. 2 Corinthians 5:1-5
- b. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8
- c. 2 Corinthians 5:9-10

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

For we live by faith, not by sight. Scripture consistently teaches that those who successfully navigate their time on earth and remain faithful to God to the end, are able to do so because they have eyes of faith. They don't focus or get sidelined by what they see and experience here and now (physical, emotional or spiritual hardships), but instead look forward with faith to the future.

1. Read Hebrews 11:1-16

a. What is faith? (v 1-2)

b. What do we understand by faith? (v 3)

i. How do the first 3 verses of Hebrews 11 tie in to 2 Cor 5:7?

c. What does faith "accomplish" for the believer? What does it make possible? (v 6)

d. What motivates those with faith? (v 10, v 13-15)

e. Why is God not ashamed to be called their God?

i. Is this lesson challenging or convicting you? What would it look like for you to live by faith and not by sight?

So we make it our goal to please him. There are lots of places where scripture teaches us what pleases Jesus. Write out Colossians 1:9-12 below, and highlight the phrases which describe how we can please Jesus. As you move into Reflection and Prayer, ask for God's help to do what pleases Him.

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 9: What Response is Required? Be Reconciled to God!

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 5:11-6:2

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others.

What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

¹³ If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view.

Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them.

And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain.

² For he says,

“In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you.”

I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2

Lesson 9: What Response is Required? Being Reconciled to God!

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 and Timothy (all the references to 'we' are referring to Paul and Timothy).
 - i. What do they know? What are they convinced of?
 - ii. What does their knowledge and their convictions cause them to do? (hint: what words does Paul use to illustrate the emotion with which he tries to convince the Corinthians of the truth?)
 - iii. What roles has God given to them? How do they define their 'job'?
 - b. Jesus Christ (Christ, the Lord)
 - i. Why did Jesus die? What was the purpose of His death according to this text?
 - ii. What did His death accomplish?

- c. God the Father
 - i. What has God the Father done according to this text?

d. The Corinthians (most references to 'you' are referring to the Corinthians)

2. **What** seems to be the nature of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians according to the first few verses of this text? (5:11-13).

3. **What** does the word "reconcile" mean? Look this word up in a dictionary and record the definition.

a. Why do people need to be reconciled to God? What is the 'problem' between people and God according to this text?

b. In light of this definition, what does it mean that God has reconciled "us" and "the world" to Himself (v 18, 19)? What does this reconciliation look like?

c. In light of this definition, what do the Corinthians need to do to be reconciled to God? What would this reconciliation look like?

i. Are you reconciled to God? How do you know?

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

5. **Where** do people need to “be” in order to be a new creation?
 - a. What does this mean?

6. **When** is the time of God’s favor? When is the day of salvation?
 - a. What does this mean?

7. **Why** do you think some people might be saying that Paul and Timothy are out of their minds? (The answer isn’t in the text, but feel free to speculate based on what you know about Paul & Timothy so far).

8. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:11-13

 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

 - d. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

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

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. In this text Paul is urging the Corinthians to understand the amazing grace offered to them by God, so that this grace can transform their lives. If we are going to be reconciled to God, and remain reconciled to God we need to understand this grace for ourselves! Look up the following texts and reflect on what they teach us about being reconciled to God.

1. Read Romans 3:9-23
 - a. What words are used to describe people living without God in 3:10-18?

 - b. What is true about everyone according to 3:19?

 - c. What is true about everyone according to 3:23?

 - d. In contrast to this bad news, what is the good news offered in 3:24-26!!!

2. Read Ephesians 2:1-3
 - a. What words are used to describe people living without God in these verses?

 - b. Reflect on Paul's use of the word "dead" here. Why does he use this word, do you think? (hint: can dead people DO anything to cause a change in their circumstances?)

3. Read Ephesians 2:4-10
 - a. What did God do for those who were dead?

 - b. Why did He do all these things?

If you want to stop right now and praise God for saving you from yourself, OR pray for God to save you from yourself please do so!!!

When you're ready, keep on going...

4. Read Ephesians 1:3-10.

- a. When was God's plan of salvation conceived? When did He come up with this idea?

- b. What are the benefits of being chosen by God and brought into His family? List everything you see in this text.

- c. What is God's will according to verse 10?
 - i. Compare this verse to 2 Corinthians 5:18-19. Although Paul uses different words in Ephesians and 2 Corinthians, the idea is the same. What is God's goal in both passages according to Paul?

5. Read Colossians 1:15-23

- a. What is the status of all people according to 1:21?

- b. What has Jesus' death accomplished for Christians?

- c. What is your status now if you are 'in Christ' (1:22)?

6. Read Colossians 2: 13-15

- a. What is the status of all people according to 2:13?

- b. What has God done for those who have 'received Jesus'?

- c. Compare Colossians 2:14 to 2 Corinthians 5:19. What does the Colossians passage add to what you learned in Corinthians?

Is there a specific sin which 'haunts' you? Does it help to know that the record of debt that stands against us is cancelled & nailed to the cross? God does not count people's sins against them. "If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20) David Garland notes, "Paul tells them to be reconciled to God because they have fallen short because of their bickering, sinful lifestyles, and participation with idols, all of which necessitate his frank reproof."² Paul's solution to this problem is found earlier in this passage. He explains that Christ "**died for all, that those who live may no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.**" (2 Cor 5:15). We demonstrate that we ARE reconciled to God, and that we have NOT received God's grace in vain (2 Cor 6:1) as we begin living more and more for Jesus rather than for ourselves.

1. Read Galatians 5:13-26.
 - a. What is an improper use of our freedom in Christ?

 - b. What is a proper use of our freedom in Christ?

 - c. What does it look like to gratify the desires of the flesh?

 - d. What does it look like to walk by the fruit of the Spirit?

 - e. Is God convicting you by His Spirit as you reflect on these verses? Is sin preventing you from being reconciled to God? How or in what area do you need the Spirit's help, right now, to live for Jesus?

2. Prayerfully read Psalm 32.
 - a. What beautiful news is foundational to both the Old and New Testaments (v 5)?

 - b. Focus on Psalm 32:6, and then read Isaiah 55:6 and Hebrews 3:12-15. What is the warning in these verses?
 - i. How does this warning relate to 2 Corinthians 6:2?

God reconciled us to himself through Christ ... Be reconciled to God.

² The New American Commentary Volume 29 - 2 Corinthians Hardcover – Nov. 1 1999, notes on 2 Corinthians 5:20

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 10:
What Response is Required? Open Hearts and Pure Lives.

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.
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2 Corinthians 6:3-7:4

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way:

in great endurance;

in troubles, hardships and distresses;

⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots;

in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;

⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness;

in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;

⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God;

with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

⁸ through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report;

genuine, yet regarded as impostors;

⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown;

dying, and yet we live on;

beaten, and yet not killed;

¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing;

poor, yet making many rich;

having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you.

¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.

¹³ As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.

For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial?

Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them
and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my people.”

¹⁷ Therefore,

“Come out from them
and be separate,
says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,
and I will receive you.”

¹⁸ And,

“I will be a Father to you,

and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.”

⁷ Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

² Make room for us in your hearts.

We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one.

³ I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you.

⁴ I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you.

I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

2 Corinthians 6:3-7:4

Lesson 10: What Response is Required? Open Hearts and Pure Lives

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 and Timothy (All of the references to 'we' in 6:3-13 and 7:2-4 refer to Paul and Timothy).
 - i. What have they experienced according to verses 4-5?

 - ii. How have they responded to what they have experienced (verses 6-7)?

 - iii. How are they viewed by others according to verses 8-9a?

 - iv. What dichotomies are they constantly facing (see verses 9b-10)?

 - This list describes some of the things that Paul and Timothy have encountered in their pursuit of Jesus, as they have lived out His call on their lives. What challenges or encourages you as you review this list? How would you compare your life or your attitude with theirs? What can you learn from them?

- v. What else do you learn about Paul & Timothy in the remainder of this text? (6:11 - 7:4)

b. God the Father

c. The Corinthians (all references to 'you' in 6:11-13 and 7:1-4)

- i. How have they responded to Paul? What kind of response is he calling for instead?

- ii. What commands does Paul give them?

d. All believers (the references to "we", "them" "you" in 6:14-7:1 refer to all believers - Paul and the Corinthians, and all who follow Jesus)

- i. What encourages or challenges you about what you learn in this section? How do these verses affect your view of God and His call on your life?

2. **What** do you think it means to not be yoked together with unbelievers? (*We'll look into this more in our Whole Bible Connections, but write down your first thoughts here so that you can see if you change your mind!*)

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. **Where** is God committed to living, and **when** will this fully and finally happen? (hint: Read Revelation 21:1-7)
 - a. How does this encourage or challenge you?

5. **Why** do you think Paul prefaces his plea for the Corinthians to “open wide their hearts” by listing all his hardships and experiences in 6:3-10? What is the purpose of these first 7 verses in his wider argument to the Corinthians?

6. **How** would you summarize each section of this text? What is the flow of thought?
 - a. 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

 - b. 2 Corinthians 6:11-13

 - c. 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

 - d. 2 Corinthians 7:2-4

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

... as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way; in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots. Sometimes, when we get discouraged about the opposition or hardships we are facing in life, it's a good reality check for us to reflect on what others have endured! Hearing the experience of others encourages us to press on, and puts our own suffering into perspective. Look up the following texts which explain some of the circumstances that Paul is referring to here. Summarize the events and also how you see Paul responding **in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God.**

1. Acts 14:1-20

2. Acts 16:11-40

3. Acts 18:1-11

4. Acts 21:27-36

5. Acts 23:12-35

6. Acts 27:27-28:10

a. How are you challenged or encouraged by reflecting on these events?

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. Commentators have different opinions on how to interpret what it means to be yoked together with unbelievers, so we're going to try to come to some conclusions on our own by looking at a variety of scripture passages. After you read through them all, we'll ask you to summarize what you think Paul's primary point is in this passage.

Option #1 - Based on Paul's word choice itself. The idea of being "unequally yoked" appears only twice in the Bible. It is used as a verb in 2 Cor 6:14, and as an adverb in the Leviticus 19:19.

1. Read Leviticus 19:19. The phrase "unequally yoked" appears in the Hebrew & Greek (original languages) in this verse, but in English it is translated as "mate, breed or crossbreed". With that in mind, what is "unequally yoked" in the first pairing of this verse?
2. Now read Deuteronomy 7:3, Ezra 9:12 and Nehemiah 13:25. The word "unequally yoked", does not come up here, but another issue does. What is it?
3. Some commentators think that Paul could be using the literal language of being unequally yoked in Leviticus 19:19 to refer to ways that people can be metaphorically yoked (in Deut 7:3, Ez 9:12, Neh 13:25), and bringing these ideas into his argument in 2 Corinthians 6:14.³ **If this is the case, what is "Option #1" when it comes to understanding what it means to not be yoked together with unbelievers?**

Option #2 - Based on what 'yokes' were used for. Google defines "yoke" as "a wooden cross piece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plow or cart that they are to pull." Read this article from GotQuestions.org (<https://www.gotquestions.org/unequally-yoked.html>)

1. **Based on the 4th paragraph of this article, what is "Option #2" when it comes to understanding what it means to not be yoked together with unbelievers?**

Option #3 - Based on the scripture passages Paul draws on as he explains this command. In 6:15-16b Paul asks questions to explain what he means, and then from 6:16c-6:18 he quotes scripture to explain what he means.

1. 2 Corinthians 6:16 quotes Leviticus 26:12, Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:34,41.
 - a. Read Leviticus 26:1-12.
 - i. What command begins this section of text (26:1)?
 - ii. How does the command in Leviticus 26:1 relate to the verse that Paul quotes (Leviticus 26:12)?

³ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (2 Co 6:14). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

2. 2 Corinthians 6:17 quotes Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:34,41.
 - a. Isaiah 52:1-12 is filled with hope. God promises that His people who have been enslaved will be set free so that “all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of their God” (52:10). As they leave the land that has enslaved them, they are to bring certain things with them. What is the command in Isaiah 52:11?
 - i. What are the articles of the LORD’s house used for?
 - b. Read Ezekiel 20:30-44.
 - i. What is the issue at stake in this text? Why were the people punished by God? (Ezekiel 20: 30-34)
 - ii. How and why does their situation change? (Ezekiel 20:39-44)
3. 2 Corinthians 6:18 alludes to scriptural ideas, but doesn’t quote a specific verse directly. We’ll explore a few of the options below.
 - a. Isaiah 43:6 uses similar language. Read Isaiah 43:1-13 in context. What is God concerned about in 43:9, 10, 11, and 12? What does He compare Himself with?
 - b. Deuteronomy 32:19 also draws on the language of sons and daughters. Read Deuteronomy 32:16-21. What is God angry about here?
4. What is the underlying issue in all the verses that Paul quotes to explain his command to not be yoked together with unbelievers?
5. Now read Paul’s question in 2 Corinthians 6:16 again. What is the focus of this verse?
6. Putting this all together, what is **“Option #3”** when it comes to understanding what it means to **not be yoked together with unbelievers?** (need one more hint? Read Numbers 25:1-5!)
7. Which option explains this command the best? Based on your research, if someone asked you to explain 2 Corinthians 6:14 what would you say?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication

Lesson 11: The Happy Result of Responding Well

2
Corinthians

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2 Corinthians 7:5-16

⁵ For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within.

⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

⁷ and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him.

He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it.

Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance.

For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.

At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.

¹³ By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴ I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me.

But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well.

¹⁵ And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling.

¹⁶ I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 7:5-16

Lesson 11: The Happy Result of Responding Well

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 and Timothy
 - i. What had they experienced and where?
 - ii. Review 2 Corinthians 1:16, 2:1-4, and 2:12-13 so that you remember what Paul said about his earlier travels. Who was Paul looking for in Troas?
 - iii. How were they encouraged and comforted? (7:6-7, 13-16)
 - b. Titus
 - i. Where did he come from?
 - ii. What news did he bring?
 - iii. What do we learn about his relationship with the Corinthians?
 - c. The Corinthians (every mention of "you" refers to the Corinthians)
 - i. How do they feel about Paul (according to Titus' report)?
 - ii. How did they respond to Paul's letter?

iii. Why does Paul have confidence in them?

d. God the Father

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** did you learn about sorrow in these verses?

a. What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?

b. What did godly sorrow produce in the Corinthians?

i. What does this teach you about the importance of confronting sin in others? And what does it teach you about how you should respond when you are confronted?

4. **What/Who** made Paul's joy and encouragement greater? (see also 2 Corinthians 7:4 just before our text)

5. **What** does Paul boast about in this text?

7. **When** did Paul change his mind about the painful letter? **Why** did Paul not regret his letter?
- a. What does this tell you about Paul's heart for the Corinthian believers?
8. **Why** did Paul write the harsh letter to them (according to verse 12)?
9. **Why** was Titus happy?
10. **How** did the Corinthians receive Titus?
- a. What does this tell you about their attitude towards Paul/Timothy/Titus?
11. **How** would you summarize each section of this text ? What is the flow of thought?
- a. 2 Corinthians 7:5-7
 - b. 2 Corinthians 7:8-13a
 - c. 2 Corinthians 7:13b-16
12. **How** would you summarize the main point of this passage? What does Paul want the Corinthians to know or to do?

Whole Bible Connections

But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus. Paul returns to his theme of comfort in this chapter. In chapter 1:3-7 he described the Father as the God of all comfort; now in this text Paul specifically notes that God comforts **the downcast**.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:4-10 again to refresh yourself on what Paul has been experiencing. Then he opens this section explaining that even in Macedonia he had **no rest but was harassed at every turn**. Yet God continued to care for and comfort him in the deepest of lows. Let's explore other places in the Bible where God's heart for the downcast is clearly seen.

1. List the ways God comforts His downcast people. What are some of the things God *does*?
 - a. Psalm 34:17-19

 - b. Isaiah 49:13-16

2. Read Colossians 4:7-11.
 - a. *Who* does God use to bring comfort?

 - b. What is it specifically that encourages Paul?

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10
 - a. *Who* does God use to bring comfort?

 - b. What is it specifically that encourages Paul?

4. How do the above passages connect to 2 Cor. 7:6-7, 13?
 - a. Is there a time when you have been encouraged or comforted by hearing the testimony or faith of someone else?

- b. What does this teach you about the purpose of the body of Christ? Are you someone who brings comfort or sorrow to those around you? How does this challenge or convict you?

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. Paul knew that his letter caused sorrow to the Corinthians, but ultimately he did not regret it because they became sorrowful “**as God intended**”. But, there are two different types of sorrow according to this text. How can you tell if you have godly sorrow or worldly sorrow?

1. Look up the following verses and note the different *causes of sorrow* as well as the different *results of sorrow*.

Cause of Sorrow	Results: Action Taken and/or God's Response	Godly or Worldly Sorrow?
<i>Numbers 14:26-39</i>	<i>Numbers 14:39-45</i>	
<i>Psalms 51:1-16</i>	<i>Psalms 51:1-4, 10-13, 17</i>	
<i>Jonah 3:1-4</i>	<i>Jonah 3:5-10</i>	
<i>Matthew 27:1-3</i>	<i>Matthew 27:4-5</i>	
<i>James 4:1-6</i>	<i>James 4:7-10</i>	

2. How would you summarize the difference between the kinds of two sorrow?

3. What has your experience been when sin has been exposed in your life? Have you reacted with godly sorrow or with worldly sorrow?

4. Based on these verses and 2 Corinthians 7:9-11, why does God use sorrow in our lives? What should godly sorrow produce in you?

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. As an apostle, and the founder of this church, Paul was responsible for its purity and therefore he had sent them a difficult letter of correction (see 2 Cor. 2:1-4, 9 for a refresher). Let's look at some other instances where church leaders or Jesus Himself corrects believers.

1. Read Mark 8:31-33. What was Peter's mistake? How did he need to change his thinking?

2. Read 2 Timothy 2:23-26. What should characterize "the Lord's servant"?
 - a. What should he do to those who oppose him? Why?

3. Read Titus 1:10-14. What is the problem/danger/reason for the rebuke?
 - a. What is the desired response of the rebuke?

4. How do these passages connect to Paul's interaction with the Corinthians?
 - a. How does this challenge or encourage you as you think about your own church leaders and their responsibility to lead and care for you? How does it change your perspective when they share a difficult message or rebuke with you?

Reflection:

- Adoration

- Confession

- Supplication