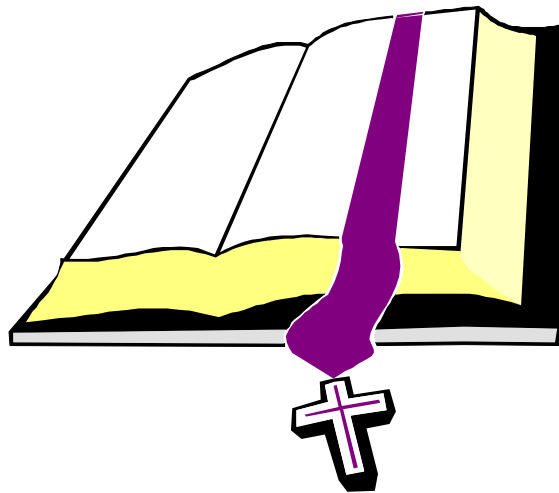


2 CORINTHIANS



*“For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,
and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.” (2 Corinthians 4:5)*

Lessons By: Rob Harbison

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INTRODUCTION

Lesson 1

AUTHOR—Paul (1:1; 10:1)

DATE—ca. 56 AD

PLACE—Written from Macedonia, possibly Philippi (2:13; 7:5). Paul writes to prepare the way for his third visit to Corinth (13:1). Titus and two companions, deliver the epistle to the church (2 Corinthians 8:6,16-24).

BACKGROUND—

The City Of Corinth. During Paul's time, Corinth was the most important city of Greece, probably the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire, according to Erdman. Athens was a greater center of culture, religion and philosophy, with the goddess Athena, the goddess of the mind, overshadowing the city (Acts 17:16-34). Whereas, Corinth was a greater center of greed, lust, and debauchery—with the goddess Aphrodite, goddess of the body—underlying the corruption of the city (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 6:9-11).

- Farrar says it was “...a city conspicuous for its depravity even amid the depraved cities of a dying heathenism.”
- Gettys describes it as “a seaman's paradise, a drunkard's heaven, and a virtuous woman's hell.”
- Barclay says Corinth “was a by-word for evil and immoral living. The very word *korinthiazesthai* (to live like a Corinthian), has become a part of the Greek language; and it meant to live with drunken and immoral debauchery...”

Corinth was world-renowned for the temple of Aphrodite, which sat on the hill of the Acropolis, with her 1000 priestesses, who were nothing more than temple prostitutes. Yet, it was this ungodly city wherein God told Paul “I have many people in this city” (Acts 18:9-11).

History Of Church In Corinth. Established at the end of Paul's second missionary journey, about 50AD, the church was a mixture of Gentiles (Acts 18:7) and Jews (Acts 18:2,8,17) from the very beginning. Silas and Timothy joined Paul shortly after his arrival. After his conversion, Apollos preached and built up the church in Paul's absence (Acts 18:24-19:1). He evidently converted many of them (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6). There is also the possibility that Peter ministered to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:22; 9:5), although his name may only be used to illustrate Paul's point regarding partyism (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6).

Reconstruction Of Events And Dates. The following is taken from *Survey Of First Corinthians*, by Jimmy Allen, pp. 19-20. Paul mentions two additional epistles he wrote to the Corinthians which we do not have recorded.

- 50-52AD Paul's first visit to Corinth. He remained for eighteen months.
- 52AD Apollos went to Corinth from Ephesus (Acts 19:1).
- 53AD Paul, from Ephesus, wrote Corinthians A which dealt with the matter of refusing fellowship to Christians involved in sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:9).
- 54AD Paul received a report from Chloe's house concerning division in the Corinthian church. He also received a letter from Corinth asking a number of questions (1 Corinthians 1:11; 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1).
- 54-55AD From Ephesus, Paul wrote Corinthians B (*i.e.* 1 Corinthians) in response to the report and letter he had received from Corinth.
- 54-55AD Paul then sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia (Acts 19:22). He intended to follow them (Acts 19:21; 1 Corinthians 16:5-6), however, it seems that his plan was not carried out since he stayed in Asia for a while (Acts 19:22).

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- 54-55AD Paul learned of trouble in Corinth and crossed the Aegean Sea to deal with it. He then returned to Ephesus.
 - 54-55AD When back in Ephesus, Paul wrote the severe letter or Corinthians C to the church at Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:3-4).
 - 55AD Either the severe letter was carried by Titus or Paul sent him later to learn how the brethren had received it (2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:6-8). Apparently, Titus made his journey across the Aegean Sea to Corinth and was to return by land to meet Paul at Troas (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). This is implied from the fact that Paul, not finding Titus at Troas, went into Macedonia.
 - 55-56AD Paul left Troas and went into Macedonia where he met Titus who comforted him with a favorable report about how the Corinthians had responded to his severe letter (2 Corinthians 7:5-7).
 - 55-56AD Paul was united with Timothy in Macedonia (Acts 19:22; 2 Corinthians 1:1).
 - 55-56AD Paul wrote Corinthians D (*i.e.* 2 Corinthians) in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 7:5).
 - 55-56AD Paul made his third visit to Corinth (Acts 20:1-3; 2 Corinthians 12:14).

CLUES—

Intensely Personal. Some could mistakenly consider the letter of 1 Corinthians to be cold and stern—not so with 2 Corinthians. Here the apostle pours out his heart to his brethren (2:4). His concern for them was so great, and his heart so restless, that he passed up a great opportunity to preach in Troas, to learn of the Corinthian’s condition (2:12-13; 7:5-7,13). His concern continued daily (11:28). With his heart opened wide to them, he longed for them to open their hearts to him too (6:11-13; 7:2). He had boasted of them to Titus (7:14), to other churches (8:24), and to the Macedonians (9:2-4). Paul was jealous for them like a father for his children (11:2; 12:14), and gladly sacrificed himself for them (11:7-9; 12:14-15).

Ministry Of The Gospel. The ministry of the gospel is greater than any man who preaches it (2:16; 3:5). It is an aroma of life to those who accept it and death to those who reject it (2:14-16). It is a glorious ministry (3:6-18), demanding sincerity (2:17), and pointing men to Christ instead of self (4:1-6). Its effectiveness comes from God’s power (4:7) and the minister’s dogged perseverance (4:8-15). Knowing the terror of the Lord (5:11), and the love of Christ (5:13-15,18-21), he persuades men. Ministry demands commitment (6:3-10), in spite of conflicts without and fears within (7:5). There is no place for self-promotion (10:12-18), only for self-denial (12:14-15). The former are false ministers (11:13-15,23).

Contrasts. This epistle is full of contrasts—suffering and comfort (1:3-7), glory of old and new covenant (3:7-18), distressed but not defeated (4:8-12), affliction and glory (4:16-18), temporary and eternal (4:16-5:8), poverty and riches (8:1-15), boasting and humility (10:12-18), true ministers and false (11:2-4,13-15), proud boasting and reluctant boasting (11:16-12:6), strength and weakness (12:7-12), tenderness (10:1; 12:14-15,19) and biting irony (11:4,7,19-20). As ministers of the gospel, they were faithful in contrasting things (6:4-10).

Defense Of Apostleship. A new problem had arisen—the Judaizers who plagued the church in Antioch (Acts 15) and Galatia (Galatians 1:6-7), had finally arrived in Corinth. They had convinced some to challenge Paul’s authority and motives. The leaders were arrogant domineering men (11:19-20), who boasted of their pedigree (11:22) and preached a perverted gospel (11:4). They attacked Paul as a second rate apostle (12:11-12), who was weak and vacillating (10:10), and who either did not think enough of himself to accept financial support from them (11:7), or was cunningly planning to defraud them later (12:16-18). Their empty boasting (5:12; 10:13,15; 11:12,16) made it necessary for Paul to respond (11:17-28; 12:1-6). This kind of personal defense is obviously distasteful to Paul (11:21,23; 12:11), but necessary because the attack on him was also an attack on the gospel. He would much rather boast in the strength of God (10:17; 11:30; 12:9).

SUMMARY—

Evidently written under stress, this epistle explodes with the kind of emotion which we do not often associate with the apostle Paul. We catch a glimpse into the apostle's soul—his hopes and fears, his joys and anguish, his love and pain, his commitment and sacrifice.

He begins the epistle explaining his past actions. He accounts for the delay in his visit and the tone of his rebuke in the first letter (1:12-2:11). He then explains the nature of his gospel ministry by describing the glorious nature of the gospel (2:14-4:6), the frail nature of its ministers (4:7-5:10), and the effect it has on men's lives (5:11-7:16).

He continues the epistle turning to a present need. He encourages them to give to the poor saints in Jerusalem by appealing to the Macedonian's gift (8:1-8), Christ's gift (8:9), their own gift (8:10-9:14), and God's gift (9:15).

He concludes the epistle expressing his anxieties about a future confrontation with his critics. Unlike their boasting, his authority was from the Lord (10:1-18). He feared for those who followed these false ministers of the gospel rather than the true (11:1-15). He had to turn to foolish boasting to silence those who boasted in lesser things (11:16-12:10; cf. Proverbs 26:4-5). He bore the signs of an apostle and would come to them with authority to challenge them and his critics (12:11-13:10).

OUTLINE—

I. Salutation (1:1-2)

II. Principles Of Paul's Ministry (1:3-7:16)

- A. Comfort In Suffering (1:3-11)
- B. Explanations For His Actions (1:12-2:13)
- C. Nature Of Paul's Ministry (2:14-7:3)
 - 1. The Fragrance Of Christ (2:14-17)
 - 2. Minister Of Glorious New Covenant (3:1-18)
 - 3. Honesty (4:1-6)
 - 4. Suffering (4:7-15)
 - 5. Hopeful (4:16-5:10)
 - 6. Reconciling (5:11-21)
 - 7. Blameless (6:1-10)
 - 8. Open-Hearted (6:11-7:3)
- D. The Corinthians' Repentance (7:4-16)

III. Necessity For Corinthians' Ministry (8:1-9:15)

- A. The Macedonians' Gift (8:1-9)
- B. The Corinthians' Gift (8:10-9:15)
 - 1. The Exhortation (8:10-15)
 - 2. The Messengers (8:16-24)
 - 3. Ministering To The Saints (9:1-15)

IV. Vindication Of Paul's Ministry (10:1-13:10)

- A. Reality Of Paul's Authority (10:1-11)
- B. Measure Of True Authority (10:12-18)
- C. True And False Apostles (11:1-15)
- D. Paul's Reluctant Boasting (11:16-12:13)
 - 1. Boasting In Suffering (11:16-33)
 - 2. Boasting In Revelations (12:1-6)
 - 3. Boasting In Christ (12:7-10)
 - 4. Signs Of An Apostle (12:11-13)
- E. Warning Of Paul's Impending Visit (12:14-13:10)

V. Closing Remarks And Greetings (13:11-14)

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *After reading 2 Corinthians in one setting, what repeated words or phrases did you observe? What do these words and phrases tell you about the message of the book?*
- 2) *Did you see any pattern developing as the book unfolded? What pattern(s) did you see, if any?*
- 3) *Describe Paul's feelings for the brethren at Corinth. Is that the same apostle Paul you have always pictured?*
- 4) *Why are there so many contrasts in this book? What do such contrasts do for our understanding of Paul's points?*
- 5) *What is Paul attempting to do with the Corinthians in regard to giving, other than just taking up money for needy saints?*
- 6) *Why was Paul compelled to offset the boasting of his critics, even though that placed him in danger of giving credibility to them and participating in their folly (cf. Proverbs 26:4-5)?*

CHAPTER 1:1-11

Lesson 2

KEY VERSE—

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort” (1:3)

SUMMARY—

This second letter to the Corinthians is unique among Paul’s writings, because it shows us the depth of his heart and emotions. It gives us insight into his motives, his struggles, and his yearnings. It shows us the impulses of his soul which are behind his actions. We see a side that many who think of Paul as a hard-nosed bulwark of faith seldom see—his tenderness and concern.

Paul begins with a greeting which affirms his apostleship from the very beginning (1:1-2). He then gives thanks to God for the comfort God gives us in our suffering—a comfort which we can share with others (1:3-7). He then gives thanks to God for delivering him in his own sufferings (1:8-11).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Why does Paul affirm his apostleship at the very beginning of this epistle (1:1)? What does he have to battle throughout the entire epistle (12:11-12; 13:3)?*

- 2) *Who had elevated Paul to this position (1:1; Acts 26:12-18)?*

- 3) *What does the word “saint” mean (1:2)? How could Paul describe the Corinthians as “saints” in view of all the problems they had and sins they had committed?*

- 4) *How does Paul describe God?*
 - ⇒ 1:3a—
 - ⇒ 1:3b—
 - ⇒ 1:3c—

- 5) *What two reasons did Paul express for his thanksgiving?*
 - ⇒ 1:3-7—
 - ⇒ 1:8-11—

- 6) *How many times do these verses mention “comfort” and “consolation” (1:3-7)? What does that tell us about the emphasis of this section?*

- 7) *Why do we receive comfort from God (1:4)? How does that make any difference?*

- 8) *What had Paul faced which God comforted him through (1:5)? Why had this suffering come upon him(1:5a)?*

9) *Who else benefitted from the comfort Paul received (1:6)? What did comfort in Christ produce in the Corinthians (1:6)?*

10) *How bad were Paul's troubles (1:8-9)? What did he learn in difficulties (1:9b)?*

11) *Who else does Paul credit with his deliverance through such suffering (1:11)? What had they done for him?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 1:12-2:13

Lesson 3

KEY VERSE—

“But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow” (2:1)

SUMMARY—

Sometimes a Christian minister must defend his character and explain his conduct. Paul’s competitors always found a way to criticize him. Evidently, he had been charged with fickleness and duplicity. Paul explains his actions.

He boasts in his sincerity—of which they were well aware (1:12-14). He admits to changing his plans in coming to them—which in no way made him a liar or his gospel message any less reliable (1:15-22). He explains why he delayed coming to them—it was for their benefit, to save them the embarrassment and humiliation of facing him (1:23-2:2). Their disciplinary action against the guilty brother was a test of their faithfulness—but so was their reception of him after his repentance (2:3-11). Far from being stern and heartless, Paul’s words distressed him and he longed to know of the Corinthians’ response (2:12-13).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What kind of conduct had Paul exhibited among the Corinthians (1:12)?*

- 2) *In Paul’s defense we see undertones of the accusations of his slanderers. What were they evidently saying about him?*
 - ⇒ *1:12a—*
 - ⇒ *1:12b—*
 - ⇒ *1:13—*

- 3) *What two things does Paul boast in?*
 - ⇒ *1:12—*
 - ⇒ *1:14—*

- 4) *How are Paul and the Corinthians each the other one’s boast (1:14; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20)?*

- 5) *Paul had changed his plans (1:15-16). What were others accusing Paul of doing when he spoke his words (1:17)? What were they then implying about his teachings about Christ (1:19-20)?*

- 6) *What does he say about his words (1:17-18)? What does he say about his teachings about Christ (1:19-20)?*

- 7) *What does he mean when he says that Jesus Christ, who was preached among them, was “Yes” (1:19-20)?*

- 8) *What four things has God done for His people (1:21-22)?*
 - ⇒ *1:21a—*

-
- ⇒ 1:21b—
 - ⇒ 1:22a—
 - ⇒ 1:22b—

- 9) *What was the purpose of something being “sealed” (1:22)? What does it show by having the Holy Spirit as the seal placed upon us?*

- 10) *What is a “deposit” (“earnest”) (1:22)? What does it certify?*

- 11) *Why has the Spirit been given in our hearts as a deposit—a deposit of what (1:22; 5:5; cf. Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; Romans 8:11)?*

- 12) *Did Paul want the brethren to think they had to answer to him (1:24)? Can any man control another man’s faith? Who are we ultimately accountable to (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:3)?*

- 13) *Did Paul delay his coming for his benefit or for their benefit (2:1-2)?*

- 14) *How was Paul glad in their sorrow (2:2; cf. 7:6-11)?*

- 15) *Even though it pained him, why did Paul write the previous letter anyway (2:4; cf. Hebrews 12:11)?*

- 16) *Was the purpose of discipline to destroy one or restore him (2:6-8; cf. Galatians 6:1)?*

- 17) *What does Paul ask the Corinthians to do for the penitent brother—which Paul himself has done for them (2:5-8)?*

- 18) *What must punishment and discipline never do (2:7b,11; cf. Colossians 3:21)?*

- 19) *What would happen if they did not forgive the penitent brother (2:11)? How could he use that against the penitent brother? How could he use that against those who administered the correction?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 2:14-3:18

Lesson 4

KEY VERSES—

“For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death to death, and to the other the aroma of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things?” (2:15-16)

SUMMARY—

Paul comments on his own ministry in a lengthy section (2:14-6:10). As he describes his ministry, it is triumphant (2:14-17), accredited (3:1-3), glorious (3:4-18), honest (4:1-6), suffering (4:7-18), hopeful (5:1-10), devoted (5:11-21), and dedicated (6:1-10). When blameless in these things, a minister of the gospel finds himself approved (6:3).

He describes his ministry with the scene of a triumphant general entering the city of Rome, *“In pomp and glory... the proud conqueror ascended the Capitoline Hill, leading his exultant hosts. Clouds of incense filled the air with perfume. The miserable captives turned aside to die, while the praise of the victor was shouted by the multitudes amid a tumult of applause.”* (Erdman’s Commentary) (2:14-17). Rather than needing a recommendation, like his detractors, Paul’s endorsement was the lives and faith of the brethren (3:1-3). Whereas Paul’s opposition was trying to bind their legalistic interpretation of Moses’ law, Paul had lifted the veil of ignorance and introduced them to the gospel of Christ, which changes a man’s heart (3:4-18).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Over what kind of things is Christ triumphant (2:14)?*
- 2) *What does Paul mean when he says that God “diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place” (2:14)?*
- 3) *What two kinds of people does this aroma circulate through (2:15-17)?*
- 4) *What does that fragrance represent for those who are being saved (2:16)? For those who are perishing (2:16)?*
- 5) *How does Paul express both the seriousness of the ministry of the gospel and his own inadequacy (2:16)? What actually helped make him adequate for that ministry (3:5-6)?*
- 6) *What is the difference between Paul and these other ministers (2:17)?*
- 7) *What was the purpose of these “letters of commendation” (3:1; cf. Acts 18:27; Romans 16:1-2)? How does Paul deal a blow to those who need letters of commendation?*
- 8) *What are some of the best credentials to establish the faithfulness of a gospel minister (3:2-3)? Where was Paul’s endorsement written (3:3)?*
- 9) *How should we act, knowing we are an advertisement for Christianity (3:2-3)?*

10) Paul contrasts the Old Testament with the New Testament (3:3-16). List the contrasts, placing them side by side

- | | |
|------|----|
| ⇒ a) | a) |
| ⇒ b) | b) |
| ⇒ c) | c) |
| ⇒ d) | d) |
| ⇒ e) | e) |
| ⇒ f) | f) |
| ⇒ g) | g) |
| ⇒ h) | h) |

11) How are the concepts of “the letter of the law” and “the spirit of the law” commonly misused and abused by people today (3:6)?

12) What was written on “tables of stone” (3:7; cf. Exodus 34:1-4; Deuteronomy 10:1-4)?

13) What happened when Moses came down from Mt. Sinai, after receiving the law of God (Exodus 34:29-35)?

14) Why did Moses wear the veil over his face (3:7,12-13)? What does the fading brightness of Moses’ face indicate about the law he was giving them (3:12-13)?

15) How does Paul describe those who still hold to the law which was passing away (3:14-16)?

16) The Old Testament actually points men to Christ (John 5:39-47). Why could these people not see it (3:14-16)?

17) How is there liberty “where the Spirit of the Lord is”? Is it liberty to do what we want to do or freedom to serve God after being liberated from sin (3:17)?

18) What was the result of Moses’ encounter with God’s presence (3:7)? What is the result of our encounter with Christ (3:18)?

19) How is Jesus’ glory transferred to us—what is the power behind this transformation (3:18)? From where does the Spirit work (3:3)?

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 4:1-5:10

Lesson 5

KEY VERSE—

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” (4:16)

SUMMARY—

Paul continues describing the ministry he has been called to by God. Even though it is fraught with difficulties, he does not lose heart (4:1). His ministry was an honest and sincere one—if it was not accepted by people, it was because they rejected the light of the gospel, not because he failed to present it (4:1-6).

Critics questioned the sincerity of Paul, but that was strange considering the fact that he suffered so much for the sake of his ministry. Yet he did not lose heart (4:7-16). It was by his faith he persevered (4:7-12), through his faith he preached (4:13-15), and on account of his faith that he hoped for something better (4:16-18). In his hope he was confident—assured that God had something better prepared for His people (5:1-8), and that all of us would appear before Him in judgment (5:9-10).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What two things help keep Paul from losing heart (4:1)?*

- 2) *What does Paul say about his ministry in response to the accusations of his critics (4:2)? What does Paul infer about the ministry of his critics? What does he say his ministry actually does (4:2d)?*

- 3) *Why are men blinded to the light of the gospel (4:3-4)? Who is “the god of this age” (4:4; cf. John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)?*

- 4) *Paul uses an analogy of a “veil” three different times in this passage. In the following verses identify who placed the veil and what it was hiding.*
 - ⇒ *Veil 1 (3:13)—*
 - ⇒ *Veil 2 (3:14-15)—*
 - ⇒ *Veil 3 (4:3-4)—*

Who takes away the veil of ignorance (3:16)? Who places the veil of ignorance (4:3-4)?

- 5) *How does Paul present himself to them (4:5)?*

- 6) *Where did the light from Moses’ face originate? Where did the light of the gospel originate (4:5-6)?*

- 7) *What two things has God brought light into (4:6)?*

- 8) *How does the frailty of men emphasize and highlight the power of God (4:7)?*

9) Identify and explain each of the paradoxes Paul emphasizes about his ministry (4:8-12).

- ⇒ 4:8a–
- ⇒ 4:8b–
- ⇒ 4:9a–
- ⇒ 4:9b–
- ⇒ 4:10–
- ⇒ 4:11–
- ⇒ 4:12–

10) Paul quotes a statement of the Psalmist—“I believed and therefore I spoke” (4:13; Psalm 116:10). Read Psalm 116. What was the response of this Psalmist to the salvation and deliverance he received from God—what did it prompt him to do (116:2,4,9-10,12-14,17-18)? How does this relate to what Paul is saying?

11) For whose sake does Paul do everything that he does (4:15)?

12) What are the processes of destruction and renewal which are going on at the same time (4:16-18)? How are they actually related?

13) What was Paul’s secret of endurance (4:16-18)?

- ⇒ 4:16–
- ⇒ 4:17–
- ⇒ 4:18–

14) How is it possible to see things that are unseen (4:18; 5:7; cf. Hebrews 11:27)?

15) On what does Paul base his knowledge of an eternal home in heaven (5:1; see 4:7,13-14)?

16) What is “this tent” which he mentions (5:1)? With what will we be clothed (5:2-3)? Does Paul speak about a “death wish” or a desire for something greater (5:4b)? What does death actually bring us (5:4c)?

17) Why is the Spirit given to us (5:5)? What gives us confidence (5:6-7)?

18) What two reasons motivate us to live faithfully to the Lord at all times (5:9-10)?

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 5:11-6:10

Lesson 6

KEY VERSE—

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.” (5:20)

SUMMARY—

Paul concludes this lengthy discussion of his ministry (2:14-6:10). First, he describes his motivations for involvement in this ministry (5:11-21)—the terror of the Lord (5:11), the promptings of his heart (5:12), the sake of these brethren (5:13), the compulsion he feels from the love of Christ (5:14-15), and the new creature he has become in Christ (5:16-17). Next, he acknowledges his commission to be an ambassador, extending God’s invitation of reconciliation to the world (5:18-21). He pleads with them not to reject this opportunity (6:1-2).

Finally, Paul catalogs the marks of his ministry (6:3-10). He intended to bring no reproach upon it (6:3). The proof of his integrity and sincerity was his endurance through hardships (6:4-5), the demonstration of God’s grace in his life (6:6-7), his integrity in the face of criticisms (6:8), and the positive turn of negative things in his life (6:9-10).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What motivated and constrained Paul to preach (5:11-15)?*
 - ⇒ 5:11—
 - ⇒ 5:12—
 - ⇒ 5:13—
 - ⇒ 5:14-15—

- 2) *What reality is closely related to the hope of eternal life (5:11)?*

- 3) *Who is Paul convinced that knows of his aims and motives (5:11b)?*

- 4) *Why is Paul boasting to these brethren about his motives (5:12)? In what does he indicate his critics have to boast (5:12b)?*

- 5) *Why did Paul act the way he did (5:13)?*

- 6) *Is Paul speaking of his own love for Christ, or something else (5:14)? How can the love of Christ overcome a man’s self-serving attitude (5:14-15)?*

- 7) *What does Paul mean when he says “that if one died for all, then all died” (5:14)? What was the purpose of this death (5:15)? Who are “those who live” (5:15)?*

- 8) *How radical is the change we undergo (5:17)? What kind of “old things” are passed away in Christ (5:17b)?*

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- 9) *What is meant by “reconciliation” (5:18-20)? Why does Paul beg them to “be reconciled to God” if they are already Christians (5:20)?*
- 10) *What is an “ambassador” (5:20)? What three parties are involved in any situation where an ambassador serves (5:20)? Why would it be wrong to speak of men today as “ambassadors”?*
- 11) *What does the gospel announce to us about God and His Son?*
- ⇒ 5:15–
 - ⇒ 5:18–
 - ⇒ 5:21–
- 12) *What can the Christian now become (5:17)? What did Jesus have to become to make that possible (5:21)? What does he mean that Jesus was made “sin for us”? Did Jesus ever sin (5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21-22)?*
- 13) *Is it possible to frustrate God’s grace (6:1)? What does God’s grace offer (5:18-19)? Why should salvation be accepted now (6:2)?*
- 14) *Why does Paul live his life above reproach (6:3)?*
- 15) *What idea does Paul begin with when describing the troubles he endured (6:4b)? Describe any examples of the physical sufferings and hardships of Paul which you can remember from other Bible references (6:4-5).*
- 16) *How do each of these things commend Paul to them as a faithful minister of the gospel (6:6-7)?*
- ⇒ “by purity” –
 - ⇒ “by knowledge” –
 - ⇒ “by longsuffering” –
 - ⇒ “by kindness” –
 - ⇒ “by the Holy Spirit” –
 - ⇒ “by sincere love” –
 - ⇒ “by the word of truth” –
 - ⇒ “by the power of God” –
 - ⇒ “by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and left” –
- 17) *How do negative things take such a positive turn in Paul’s life (6:8-10)?*
- ⇒ “by honor and dishonor” –
 - ⇒ “by evil and good report” –
 - ⇒ “as deceivers and yet true” –
 - ⇒ “as unknown and yet well-known” –
 - ⇒ “as dying and behold we live” –

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- ⇒ *“as chastened and yet not killed”* –
 - ⇒ *“as sorrowful yet always rejoicing”* –
 - ⇒ *“as poor yet making many rich”* –
 - ⇒ *“as having nothing yet possessing all things”* –

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 6:11-7:16

Lesson 7

KEY VERSE—

“For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” (7:10)

SUMMARY—

Having completed the discussion about his ministry—its nature and motivations—Paul appeals to his friends for sympathy and affection (6:11-7:4). More than just being convinced of his sincerity—he longs for their devotion and love. He asks them to open their hearts to him as he did to them (6:11-13). He pleads that they separate themselves from entangling alliances with idolaters (6:14-7:1), then continues his appeal to open their hearts to him (7:2-4).

Paul abruptly returns to discussing his deep concern for the Corinthians, and their reaction to his letter condemning sin among them (2:12-13), after being sidetracked discussing his ministry, personal integrity and sincerity (2:14-6:10). He sighs his relief in learning of their reactions to his letter—love and zeal for him, repentance from their sins, and a clearing of themselves (7:5-12). He closes expressing his full confidence in these brethren (7:13-16).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Describe Paul’s feelings for these Corinthian brethren (6:11). What hinders them from responding with the same kind of love and openness to him (6:12)? For what reason should they open themselves to him (6:13)?*

- 2) *What does it mean to be “unequally yoked” (6:14)? Why would it be foolish to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (6:14-16a)? What is the consistent point of all of these illustrations?*

- 3) *Is the statement “do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers” (6:14) made in regard to the marriage of a Christian and unbeliever (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:12-14)? What can we learn from this principle though?*

- 4) *Should they cut off all contact with unbelievers (6:14-16; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9-10; 10:27; 14:23-25)? What are they to cut off (6:14a)?*

- 5) *What kind of relationship will God have with those who comprise His temple (6:16)? What does God require of His people in order to have this relationship with them (6:17)?*

- 6) *What does God agree to do for His people in response to their faithfulness(6:16-18)?*
 - ⇒ 6:16b—
 - ⇒ 6:16c—
 - ⇒ 6:18a—

- 7) *What promises does Paul refer to in 7:1? What should we do in response to these promises (7:1)?*

- 8) *What accusations were not true about Paul (7:2)? What three things does he insist are his true motives toward them (7:3-4)?*

9) Observe every reference to “joy” in 7:4-16. Identify the cause of joy in each case.

- ⇒ 7:4–
- ⇒ 7:7–
- ⇒ 7:9–
- ⇒ 7:13–
- ⇒ 7:16–

10) Over what had Paul been troubled (7:4c-5)? How did God bring Paul comfort over this situation—in what two things did he find comfort (7:6-7)?

11) What did Titus report to Paul about the Corinthians (7:7b)?

12) What was Paul’s initial reaction about sending the letter (7:8a)? Why did he now rejoice (7:8-9a)? How could there be such a drastic change in his attitude (7:8-9)?

13) Repentance is (1) a change of mind (2) brought about by godly sorrow that (3) results in a change of life. Show each part of this definition from verses 9-11.

14) What is the “sorrow of the world” (7:10)? What does it produce? Why is it so different from godly sorrow? What does godly sorrow produce (7:9-10)?

15) What were the fruits of their godly sorrow and repentance (7:11). Explain each of the following:

- ⇒ “diligence” –
- ⇒ “clearing of yourselves” –
- ⇒ “indignation” –
- ⇒ “fear” –
- ⇒ “vehement desire” –
- ⇒ “zeal” –
- ⇒ “vindication” –

16) What did Paul insist was not his purpose for writing them (7:12a)? What was his purpose (7:12b)?

17) How did Titus react to the response of the Corinthians (7:13-16)? What does that reaffirm about the things Paul had told Titus about the Corinthians (7:14-16)?

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 8:1-24

Lesson 8

KEY VERSE—

“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.” (8:12)

SUMMARY—

Christian living involves responsibilities to both God and brethren. After defending his past actions, Paul turns his attention to a present need—the collection for the saints (chapters 8 and 9). They had been instructed to begin this collection in his first epistle (1 Corinthians 16:1-4). He encourages and challenges them to give to the poor saints in Jerusalem, by an appeal to the Macedonian’s gift (8:1-8), Christ’s gift (8:9), and finally to God’s gift (9:15).

His appeal begins by noting other examples of generosity—the Macedonians and Jesus (8:1-9). He then challenges them to finish what they had begun, and show the same degree of generosity (8:10-15). He then gives the credentials of the messengers who were entrusted with these gifts, to insure that they were administered faithfully (8:16-24).

QUESTIONS—

1) *What do you know about this “collection for the saints” from the following passages?*

- ⇒ *1 Corinthians 16:1-4—*
- ⇒ *Romans 15:25-27—*
- ⇒ *Galatians 2:9-10—*
- ⇒ *Acts 24:17—*

2) *Does Paul seem to be a little brash or bold to ask such a great thing of brethren whom he had previously rebuked—what attitude had Paul always exhibited toward them (7:16; 8:7,24; cf. 1:14; 7:4,14; 9:2-4)?*

3) *What does Paul say about the character of the generosity he witnessed in the Macedonians (8:1-5)?*

- ⇒ *8:1b—*
- ⇒ *8:2a—*
- ⇒ *8:2b—*
- ⇒ *8:3a—*
- ⇒ *8:3b—*
- ⇒ *8:4a—*
- ⇒ *8:5b—*
- ⇒ *8:5c—*

4) *What did the afflictions and poverty of the Macedonians actually accomplish for them (8:2)?*

5) *By what standard did the Macedonians measure their giving (8:3)? Why would they have to “implore” (beg) Paul to receive their gift (8:4)?*

6) *What did Paul request of the Corinthians (8:6)? Based on what characteristic that existed in them, did he make that request (8:7)?*

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- 7) *Does it strike you as odd or meaningful that Paul never used the word “money” in his instructions? What is he appealing to in his readers? How does he describe this benevolent aid (8:1,4,6,7,19,20; 9:1,5,8,15)?*
- 8) *Does Paul command their gift (8:8)? What does he appeal to? Why would generosity be meaningless if it had been commanded? What challenges does he hold before them ?*
- ⇒ 8:1-5—
 ⇒ 8:9—
 ⇒ 8:24—
- 9) *What did the example of the Macedonian’s generosity do (8:8)? Where did they learn it (8:9)?*
- 10) *What was Paul’s advice to them about their own gift (8:10-11)?*
- 11) *What does God seek in us—the gift or the giving spirit (8:12)? What is more important than the amount of the gift? What is a Christian’s obligation when deciding how much he gives to the Lord’s work?*
- 12) *Why mention the children of Israel gathering manna in this specific discussion (8:13-15; cf. Exodus 16:13-19)?*
- 13) *What is characteristic of each of the brethren who were entrusted with funds for the needy saints (8:16-19,22-23)? Why was this so important (8:20-21)?*
- 14) *Who was Titus concerned about in regard to this contribution (8:16)? Why is that significant?*
- 15) *Notice the credentials of the men collecting the gifts. What is said about each?*
- ⇒ Titus (8:16-17)—
 ⇒ The chosen brother (8:18-21)—
 ⇒ Our brother (8:22)—
- Not only were these three men reputable, but what else does Paul say about them (8:23)?*
- 16) *What two things are protected when there is openness about the management and disbursement of money used in the Lord’s work?*
- 17) *What does verse 24 teach us about works in the Christian life?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday
 Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday

CHAPTER 9:1-15

Lesson 9

KEY VERSE—

“And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work.” (9:8)

SUMMARY—

The subject of this chapter, like the chapter before it, is the “*ministering to the saints*” (9:1). It is not a passage about general church benevolence. This is an important distinction to make because of the ongoing debate among brethren concerning the subject of church benevolence.

Paul begins by discussing their readiness in giving (9:1-5). He has confidence in their liberality, but does not want them to be caught off guard by not having the gift ready when he and the others arrived. He had boasted about them to others. He then teaches important principles concerning the spirit of giving (9:6-7). Finally, he discusses the blessings which come from their giving (9:8-15)—blessings which they themselves receive (9:8-11), which the needy saints receive (9:12), and the glory which God receives from their gift (9:13-15).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What is the subject of this chapter (9:1)?*

- 2) *Why does Paul say it is really unnecessary to write to the Corinthians about giving (9:1)?*
 - ⇒ 9:2a—
 - ⇒ 9:2b—
 - ⇒ 9:2c—

- 3) *If he considers it unnecessary to write to them about this gift, then why does he write about it (9:3-5)?*
 - ⇒ 9:3a—
 - ⇒ 9:3b—
 - ⇒ 9:4—
 - ⇒ 9:5c—

- 4) *What kind of gift did Paul expect should come from these brethren (9:5b)?*

- 5) *When we give to help others, are we losing something, or gaining something (9:6)? How can giving be an investment (Proverbs 11:24-25; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)?*

- 6) *What three principles are to guide our giving (9:6-7)?*

- 7) *In what ways does God’s grace abound when we give—what is God’s response to our generosity (9:8)?*
 - ⇒ 9:8b—
 - ⇒ 9:8c—

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- 8) Why does generous giving never leave us in want or lacking the things we need (9:8)?
- 9) The 112th Psalm describes the blessings of the man who fears God and delights in His commandments (112:1)—What is one way he shows his righteousness (112:9)? How does that relate to what Paul is saying in this context (9:8-10)?
- 10) Sometimes we have a hard time believing God will always give us an abundance in response to our gifts, but— who supplies the seed we sow (9:10a)? Who supplies the food the sower eats (9:10b)? Who causes the growth and increase (9:10c)?
- 11) What should God’s blessings toward us do for our giving (9:11a)?
- 12) What attitude does our liberal giving usually produce in other people (9:11b)?
- 13) What are four things that were accomplished by the liberal giving of the Corinthians (9:12-14)?
- ⇒ 9:12a—
 ⇒ 9:12b—
 ⇒ 9:13a—
 ⇒ 9:14a—
- 14) What is the “proof of this ministry” (9:13)?
- 15) What three things did the poor saints in Judea glorify God for, when they received the gift (9:13).
- ⇒ 9:13b—
 ⇒ 9:13c—
 ⇒ 9:13d—
- 16) Why did the needy saints glorify God because of this gift, rather than glorifying the Corinthians (9:13; cf. 9:14; 8:1-2,6-7,9)?
- 17) Notice the word “men” in 9:13 is italicized in Bibles where it appears—what does that mean? Who is the “all” according to the context of this passage (9:1,12)?
- 18) What is the “indescribable gift” of God referred to in this context (9:15; cf. 9:8,14; 8:1)?

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

- Sunday
 Monday
 Tuesday
 Wednesday
 Thursday
 Friday
 Saturday

CHAPTER 10:1-18

Lesson 10

KEY VERSE—

“For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” (10:18)

SUMMARY—

In the four closing chapters of this epistle, Paul turns to defend himself and vindicate his authority as an apostle of Christ. He writes in view of his approaching visit, to rebuke the false teachers and call on the brethren to repent lest it become necessary for him to come brandishing his apostolic authority and condemning them for their sins.

The false apostles had accused Paul of cowardice, weakness, and ineffectiveness (10:1-18), of not possessing a full knowledge of Christ and the true gospel (11:1-6), and of accepting no salary because he knew he was an imposter (11:7-15). He answers each of those charges in that order. In the present chapter, Paul emphasizes the spiritual war in which he is engaged and his weapons of success (10:1-6), vindicates the reality of his own apostolic authority (10:7-11), and indicates the true measuring stick of authority from God (10:12-18).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *What are some of the charges leveled against Paul by his critics (10:1-2,10)?*

- 2) *What attitude does Paul express to the Corinthians, which he hopes to be able to maintain when he comes to them (10:1-2)? What are gentleness and meekness sometimes mistaken to be (10:1,10)?*

- 3) *What is the difference between “walking in the flesh” and “warring according to the flesh” (10:3; cf. James 4:1-4)?*

- 4) *What is the striking contrast between what some were saying about Paul (10:1) and what he was actually accomplishing (10:4-6)?*

- 5) *What made his weapons mighty (10:4a)? What is Paul able to overcome and subdue with these spiritual weapons (10:4-6)?*
 - ⇒ 10:5a—
 - ⇒ 10:5b—
 - ⇒ 10:5c—
 - ⇒ 10:6a—

- 6) *What two territories do we have to win for the Lord ?*
 - ⇒ 10:4-5a—
 - ⇒ 10:5b—

What does Paul intend to do when the Corinthian church becomes obedient (10:6)?

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- 7) *What do the following verses (10:7-11) tell us about Paul's:*
- ⇒ *relationship to Christ (10:7)–*
 - ⇒ *authority in ministering (10:8a)–*
 - ⇒ *purposes in ministering (10:8b)–*
 - ⇒ *consistency in ministering (10:10-11)–*
- 8) *Why had Paul been given this authority (10:8a)? What were the imposters doing with the authority they claimed to have (10:8b)?*
- 9) *What does Paul assure them about his letters and his deeds (10:10-11)?*
- 10) *What does Paul dare not do that his detractors are doing (10:12)? How wise is it to compare ourselves to others (10:12)? How could such a course of action blind one to his own true condition (cf. 13:3,5)?*
- 11) *What measuring stick were the false apostles using to justify themselves (10:12)? What measuring stick was Paul using (10:13)?*
- 12) *What was Paul's "sphere" of labor (10:13-16)? Where did it begin (10:13-14)? Where did he expect it would end (10:16)?*
- 13) *Where did Paul's boasting leave off (10:13)? Where were his critics boasting (10:15a)?*
- 14) *What was hindering Paul from going on to new fields (10:15b)?*
- 15) *What does Paul mean by "glorying in the Lord" (10:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31)?*
- 16) *What is the source of the only praise that is worth receiving (10:17-18)?*
- 17) *How does Paul demonstrate he has been approved by the Lord—where did his weapons come from (10:1-6)? Where did his authority come from (10:7-11)? Where did his area of labor come from (10:12-17)? Where did his approval come from (10:18)?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 11:1-33

Lesson 11

KEY VERSE—

“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” (11:3)

SUMMARY—

Paul turns to a method which otherwise troubles him—boasting—to counter the influence of false apostles. He can counter it by showing that he has even more to boast in. There is nothing self-promoting about his boasting. He simply shows them—by using the very things in which they boast—that he is superior in those areas too.

He expresses his motivation for boasting (11:1-4). He then explains the reason for his actions (11:5-11) and the nature of his accusers (11:12-15). Though reluctant, Paul will boast to win them, since that is what impresses them (11:16-21; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). He emphasizes what he suffered for Christ and the love of his brethren (11:22-33). Paul does not boast in the things in which he could glory, but in his infirmities and distresses, because they point attention to the Lord (11:30; cf. 12:9-10).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Why does Paul consider boasting to be folly (11:1)?*
- 2) *Why does Paul break down and boast in his labors—what is he afraid of (11:1-4)? How had the Corinthians responded to the boasting of others (11:4)?*
- 3) *How can “jealousy” be a “godly” quality (11:2)? To whom were the Corinthians espoused (11:2)? Who was trying to woo them away from Him (11:3-4)?*
- 4) *What is the greatest danger for the Corinthians—that Paul will lose them or that Christ will lose them (11:2-3)?*
- 5) *What do we learn about the false apostles—what were they teaching (11:4; cf. Galatians 1:6-10; 2:4)?*
- 6) *Explain the sarcasm in each of the following statements:*
 - ⇒ *“You may well put up with it” (11:4)—*
 - ⇒ *“For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles” (11:5)—*
 - ⇒ *“For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise” (11:19)—*
 - ⇒ *“To our shame, I say that we were too weak for that!” (11:21)—*
- 7) *Whose credentials does Paul compare himself against (11:5)?*
- 8) *What shortcoming did Paul admit to (11:6)? Is that in any way relevant?*
- 9) *What were the false apostles implying about Paul’s refusal to take support from the Corinthians (11:7)? In what two ways was Paul supported while living in Corinth (11:8; Acts 18:1-4)?*

10) *What reasons did Paul give for not taking financial support from the Corinthians?*

- ⇒ 11:7–
- ⇒ 11:8–
- ⇒ 11:9–
- ⇒ 11:11–
- ⇒ 11:12–

11) *Why do people have a hard time believing that someone would make such a great sacrifice for the benefit of others (11:7-8)? What is the danger of judging the motives behind another man's actions (11:7-12)?*

12) *Why will Paul continue to preach the gospel without charge to them (11:12)?*

13) *How does Paul identify his opponents—what are they (11:13)?*

14) *Why do they use such methods (11:14)? Whose ministers are they actually (11:15)? What is their ultimate destiny (11:15b; cf. Philippians 3:18-19)?*

15) *Why does Paul excuse himself before boasting (11:16)? What does he say about the nature of it? Would the Lord have Paul approve himself by boasting (11:17)? What made it necessary (11:18-19)?*

16) *What is the difference between the manner which Paul treated the Corinthians (11:9) and the manner which these false apostles treated the Corinthians (11:20)?*

17) *What does Paul establish about the boasting of his opponents (11:21b)?*

18) *What is the nature of most of Paul's adversities (11:23-28)? What categories do his boastings fit into?*

- ⇒ 11:22–
- ⇒ 11:23–
- ⇒ 11:23b-25–
- ⇒ 11:26-27–
- ⇒ 11:28–

19) *What things did Paul choose to boast in (11:30)?*

20) *How did Paul originally come to Damascus (Acts 9:1-2)? How did he leave (11:32-33; Acts 9:23-25)?*

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 12:1-13

Lesson 12

KEY VERSE—

“Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.” (12:12)

SUMMARY—

Paul has been using the same kind of foolish tactics as his rivals—boasting of humanly impressive physical qualities and characteristics. This is the kind of boasting which the Corinthians had tolerated and found impressive. He then mentions the climactic human event in which one could glory—one which put all the others to shame (12:1-6). None of his detractors could top that experience. And lest Paul glory in that event, and even more abundant revelations, God did not withdraw a Satanic infirmity from him. Instead He used it to develop Paul’s strength (12:7-10).

Paul concludes these thoughts on boasting and self-commendation by explaining that they were the ones who compelled him to boast, even though they had already witnessed the proof of his apostleship when he worked among them (12:11-13).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *Why would Paul mention such a humiliating experience (11:32-33) before mentioning such a glorious one (12:1-6)?*
- 2) *Explain Paul’s statements about being “in the body” or “out of the body” (12:2-3)? What can he not say with certainty?*
- 3) *Where is the “third heaven” (12:2)? What else does he say about this “third heaven” (12:4)? Find the other occurrences of “Paradise” in the New Testament.*
- 4) *Paul is vague in his statements about this man “caught up into Paradise.” How does 12:5 support the view that this man was Paul?*
- 5) *Why would God do such a thing for Paul if he was not able to relate the experience to anyone (12:4)? What does Paul’s experience do for him? What does it do for others (12:1-4; cf. Acts 7:55-56)?*
- 6) *If this was an experience of Paul himself, why would he hesitate to clearly claim it (12:5-6; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6)? Why then does he recall it at this particular point in his discussion?*
- 7) *Unlike his critics, what is Paul determined to make his boast in (11:30; 12:5,9)?*
- 8) *What was the nature of Paul’s “thorn” (12:7a)? What was the source of it (12:7b)? What was the result of the thorn (12:7c)?*

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- 9) *Did God send this troublesome thing to the apostle (12:7)? Can God use it for His purposes (12:9)? How?*
- 10) *How did God answer Paul's prayer (12:8-9)? Are our prayers sometimes answered by not getting what we ask for?*
- 11) *Where do we find the strength to withstand hardships—from strength within or God's grace from without (12:9-10)? In what kind of man is God's power to be found (12:9-10; cf. 4:7)?*
- 12) *Why did Paul have to resort to such boasting (12:11a)?*
- 13) *Why should the Corinthians have commended and defended Paul themselves (12:11-12)?*
- 14) *What did Paul claim as the criteria for a true apostle (12:12; cf. Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:22)?*
- 15) *What does Paul imply among those who are the "most eminent apostles" when he compares himself with them (12:11)?*
- 16) *Had Paul mistreated them in any way (12:13)? How had the false apostles treated them (11:20-21)? Is Paul being a little sarcastic?*

SUMMARY—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

CHAPTER 12:14-13:14

Lesson 13

KEY VERSE—

“I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time... that if I come again I will not spare— since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.” (13:2-3)

SUMMARY—

Paul concludes this second epistle to the Corinthians by affirming his love for them, yet warning them of the undesirable scene that will take place if he comes to them before they have purged the sin from among themselves. Then they will find out the hard truth about the extent of his authority.

He plans to visit them shortly for the third time. He intends to give himself to them without being a burden (12:14-15). If some misconstrue his actions as subterfuge he will deal with that (12:16-19). His greatest fear is finding them engulfed in sins, both new and old (12:20-21). This time they can be assured he will come brandishing his authority (13:1-4). They need to examine themselves more than they examine him (13:5-6). He prefers, however, to come to them in gentleness (13:7-10). He then closes with final instructions and blessings for them (13:11-14).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) *How had Paul always treated the Corinthians (12:14-15)? How did they treat him in return (12:15b)?*

- 2) *How could such self-sacrifice be rewarded with mistrust and lack of love (12:15b; cf. 6:11-13)? How does 12:15b so vividly describe human nature many times?*

- 3) *What had some evidently charged Paul with doing (12:17)? How does he respond to such unreasonable allegations (12:16-19)?*
 - ⇒ 12:16b—
 - ⇒ 12:17—
 - ⇒ 12:18—
 - ⇒ 12:19b—

- 4) *How would you describe Paul and these messengers’ actions while being among the Corinthians (12:14-19)? What does he assure them his motives have been (12:19)?*

- 5) *What is Paul’s greatest fear when he comes to them (12:20-21)?*
 - ⇒ 12:20a—
 - ⇒ 12:20b—
 - ⇒ 12:21a—
 - ⇒ 12:21b—

- 6) *What were some of the new sins he feared he would find (12:20)? What were some of the old sins he feared he would find (12:21)?*

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- 7) *What does he intend to do if there has been no change (12:20b; 13:1-3; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:21)? Should the Corinthians look forward to that aspect of his coming?*
- 8) *Define each of the following sins (12:20). In what sense were these “new” sins?*
- ⇒ *contentions—*
 - ⇒ *jealousies—*
 - ⇒ *outbursts of wrath—*
 - ⇒ *selfish ambitions—*
 - ⇒ *backbitings—*
 - ⇒ *whisperings—*
 - ⇒ *conceits—*
 - ⇒ *tumults—*
- 9) *Define each of the following sins (12:21). In what sense were these “old” sins?*
- ⇒ *uncleanness—*
 - ⇒ *fornication—*
 - ⇒ *licentiousness—*
- 10) *What words would be established by two or three witnesses—the accusations against him of which he would demand multiple witnesses, or his words of defense which Paul’s companions would establish (13:1)? Why did these need to be established “at the mouth of two or three” (cf. Deuteronomy 19:15-21)?*
- 11) *They wanted evidence of his apostolic authority—what did he intend to give them (13:2-3)?*
- 12) *To whom does Paul liken his actions (13:3-4)? In what ways were he and Christ similar (13:4)?*
- 13) *Rather than looking for proofs of his apostleship, what should they be looking for proofs of (13:5)? When they find that, what will they know about Paul (13:6)?*
- 14) *What does Paul want the Corinthians to do, no matter what—even if it doesn’t give him an opportunity to prove his apostleship among them (13:7)?*
- 15) *Which is more important—a teacher’s reputation or the well-being of the church (13:8-10)?*
- 16) *Why had God given Paul this authority (13:10b; cf. 12:19c)?*

17) What five instructions does he give in closing (13:11-12)? Elaborate on each instruction.

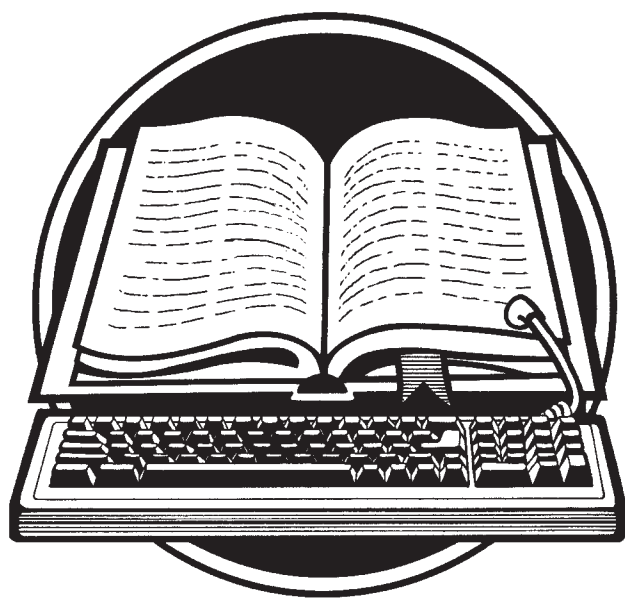
- ⇒ 13:11b–
- ⇒ 13:11c–
- ⇒ 13:11d–
- ⇒ 13:11e–
- ⇒ 13:12–

18) What are the three great blessings, from the three Divine sources, which Paul seeks for the Corinthians (13:14)?

ASSIGNMENT—

Read this passage every day before the upcoming class (check the box after each day that you read the passage)

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



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