



2 CORINTHIANS

Hearts Wide Open

Spotting an authentic servant of Jesus

Castleberry Church of Christ
Sunday Morning Bible Study
Room 7 @ 9:30am



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Hearts Wide Open

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MEND A BROKEN HEART

Introduction – 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

2 Corinthians deals with the problem of **broken relationships**. Paul invested his heart and life into the church in Corinth. Through his blood, sweat and tears the gospel created an outpost of heaven in that citadel of sin.

But after his departure the church's relationship with Paul began to sour. People joined the church who spread rumors and made accusations about Paul to elevate their own position. As a result, the church closed their heart to Paul, and the situation was breaking his.

Why do friends fall out? Why do families crumble? Why do churches divide? What can we do about it!? 2 Corinthians provides a cure for broken relationships. It works if it is carefully learned and courageously applied.

In this introductory lesson we will familiarize ourselves with some of the major themes of the letter and its historical context.

How do you mend a broken heart?

First, consider how the following verses capture the tone and purpose of Paul's writing.



¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³ In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)

What is condition of Paul's heart?

What is the condition of the Corinthian's heart?

Meet the homewreckers!

This “restriction” or division between Paul and the church was created by certain people who turned the church against Paul. The following verses sketch the character of these divisive rivals.

2 Corinthians	Divisive Rivals (record their character)
2:17	
3:1	
5:12	
11:2-4	
11:13	
11:18-20	
12:11	

The path to reconciliation

We’ve met the homewreckers, but the real question is, “Why were they so successful in Corinth?” The church was seduced by these divisive rivals because they had a false view of ministry. They thought following Jesus meant recognition, acceptance, control, and talent. But true ministry was modeled by Jesus, and it is expressed by weakness and suffering for the good of others and the glory of God. Let’s trace these themes of authentic service through the letter.

2 Corinthians	What was the pain?	How was it powerful?
1:8-11		
4:7-10		
8:2		
8:9		
12:7-10		
13:4		

“When I look upon myself, I see nothing but emptiness and weakness; but when I look upon Christ, I see nothing but fullness and sufficiency” (William Gouge)

Historical Context of the Letter

Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church spans seven years, three personal visits, four letters, and reports from multiple friends. Seeing the highlights of these interactions is essential to understand the message of 2 Corinthians. Let us consider four events that set the stage for the writing of 2 Corinthians.

The Beginning of the Church in Corinthian (Acts 18:1-10). Corinth was a pagan, immoral city with people in desperate need of the gospel (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Paul left the familiar region of Palestine and supported himself by making tents, so he could tell the Corinthians about Jesus. At first, he had little success. The Jews severely opposed the gospel and Paul was afraid. But the Lord encouraged Paul, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking...for I have many in this city who are my people" (Acts 18:10). Paul preached and an outpost of heaven was set up in the evil city. Paul taught the word of God among them for a year and a half.



Bad News & Tough Questions. Paul left Corinth and took a brief trip to Jerusalem and Antioch, but he soon returned to nearby Ephesus where he spent three years. While in Ephesus Paul received a sad report about divisive and immoral behavior in the church at Corinth. In addition, he received a letter of questions from Corinth. He wrote what we call "1 Corinthians" to correct the problems and answer the questions.



A Painful Visit. Paul's correction in 1 Corinthians was not well received. So, Paul determined to make a "painful visit" to restore the church to the Lord and himself (2 Cor. 2:1; 12:14,21; 13:1-2). Instead, someone in the congregation publicly insulted Paul, denied his authority, and the church did nothing to help. Paul left broken-hearted.



Good News and Terrible News. Paul returned to Ephesus and wrote the Corinthian church a "severe letter" in hopes of avoiding another painful visit (2 Cor. 1:23). This letter was not preserved, but it seemed to have a good effect (2 Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8-12). However, Titus brings Paul some troubling news. The attack on Paul and his apostleship continues in Corinth. His adversaries accuse him of not being a genuine apostle. Paul's credibility is on the line, but more than that, the credibility of the gospel itself is at stake. So, Paul sits down, opens his heart, and passionately pens 2 Corinthians.



A Map for 2 Corinthians

Paul Explains His Ministry (1-7)

Paul Encourages Their Generosity (8-9)

Paul Enforces His Authority (10-13)

The Power of Suffering (2 Corinthians 1:1-11)

Paul begins the letter by showing us the power which comes through suffering. He wants the church to know what authentic service looks like, so they will clearly see the artificial.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
1:1-2	
1:3-7	
1:8-11	

See the Message

Identify two ways God can use our “afflictions”? (see 1:4, 9)



Who are the ones suffering and afflicted in 2 Corinthians 1:4-7?

What role does prayer play in suffering? (1:11)

Savor the Scripture



⁴ [God] comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:4)

- Circle the phrase “so that.” (This phrase often identifies the author’s purpose or reason.)
-  Draw a jagged line under “affliction”
-  Draw a straight line under “comfort”
- Draw a square around “God”



List the ways God uses to comfort us? (Ask yourself, “How often do I see these comforts?”)

How does your pain equip you to help others? (Is there someone in your life who needs the special help you can give?)



SUFFER FOR OTHERS

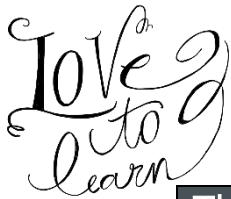
2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:13

How do you evaluate a person? Our culture evaluates people by externals like looks, position, wealth, and power. Heroes are enthroned in terms of performance, not character.

Many people evaluate religion the same way. They judge value based on the size of the building, the crowds, the buzz, the budget, the popularity.

Yet, *“the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”* (1 Sam. 16:7). Success in the eyes of God takes place in the heart. It is a matter of character.

In 2 Corinthians Paul answers his critics not by saying, “Look at how many churches I’ve started. Look at all the people I’ve converted. Look at how many know my name.” Rather, he says, “My credentials are written in my heart. My integrity reveals the reality of my work. You can see my character, not in the level of comfort I’ve achieved, but in the number of tears I’ve shed for you, and the scars I’ve received for you.” Paul’s character was revealed in suffering.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
1:12-22	
1:23 – 2:4	
2:5-11	
2:12-13	

See the Message

What are the objects of “boasting” in 2 Corinthians 1:12-14? (“boast” is used 3 times in the ESV)

Why did Paul not carry through with his plans to visit Corinth? (1:23-24)

What motivated Paul to write a painful letter to the Corinthians? (2:4)

2 Corinthians 2:5-11 describes forgiveness.

Answer the following questions to trace its beauty.

What was inflicted? (1:6)

What was produced? (1:7)

What was reaffirmed? (1:8)

What was tested? (1:9)

What was shared? (1:10)

Who was defeated? (1:11)

Savor the Scripture

“

⁴ For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Corinthians 2:4)



Circle the words “not” and “but.” (When these two words are used in the same sentence, they often identify the priority of one thing above the other.)



Draw a jagged line under “affliction” and “anguish”



Draw a straight line under “abundant love”



Draw a square around “I wrote to you” and “I have for you”

Learn
to live

Can you think of examples of how our “suffering” expresses our love for others?

Take forgiveness home with you. Think of someone who hurt you. What made the situation so painful? What did you do? What kind of contact did you have with the person? How did you express your love?



DEPENDENT ON THE LORD

2 Corinthians 2:14 – 3:18

Do you ever feel inadequate to serve the Lord? Join the club! Just think of all the prophets who tried to decline the service of the Lord because they felt incapable. Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Jeremiah and countless others said, “Lord, you’ve got the wrong person, I just can’t do it” (Ex. 4:10-17; Judges 6:15; Isa. 6:5; Jer. 1:6).

But remember, *our weaknesses are no reason to reject the commands of God.* God’s word calls us to do some difficult things, but God is not looking for adequacy. He is looking for obedience.

Also, *God is the one who makes our efforts sufficient to meet His plan.* God delights in using weak, but obedient people to accomplish his purposes, so his glory will shine more brightly (1 Cor. 3:7).

Paul was often overwhelmed, discouraged, and broken hearted in his service to the Lord. What kept him going was not confidence in his leadership skills, speaking skills, or his proficiency as an administrator. He served because he was convinced, he was not working alone—but God was working through Him. His sufficiency to serve came from God.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
2:14-17	
3:1-3	
3:4-18	

See the Message

In what way does our service to Christ have the “fragrance of death” to some?

What was the bad motivation of some ministers, and how did Paul’s motivation differ? (1:17)

What should be the result of the new covenant in our lives? (3:18)

Read 2 Corinthians 3:4-18 and...





List the differences between the Old and New Covenant

Old Covenant	New Covenant

Savor the Scripture



⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Corinthians 3:5-6)

-  Circle the words “not” and “but.” (When these two words are used in the same sentence, they often identify the priority of one thing above the other.)
-  Draw a jagged line under “letter”
-  Draw a straight line under “Spirit”
-  Draw a square around “sufficient”



In what ways does God make your weak, inadequate service sufficient?

How does God accomplish your transformation into the glory of the Lord?
How is it going?



SHINE THE GOSPEL

2 Corinthians 4:1-18

You may hear people say, “For Christ’s sake!” It is usually said in disgust, and the person saying it is not thinking about Jesus.

However, this blasphemous phrase has a more noble history. It is a shortened version of, “Christ does everything right, and what you are doing is against his righteous will. So please stop it.” Well, that takes a little longer to say, but it is a really good thought.

Paul said he lived *“for Jesus’ sake”* (4:5,11). He evaluated his life by what pleased Jesus. This is why Paul gave special attention to the gospel. The gospel is what reveals Jesus and shows us what pleases him. The gospel is of great value! The gospel is so precious Paul describes it as a light which allows us to see Jesus clearly and like a valuable “treasure.”

So, Paul commits himself to shine the gospel so the world can see Jesus. He invites us to join him. If we believe it, then we should shine it! This will give us a certain courage and integrity about life.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
4:1-6	
4:7-12	
4:13-18	

See the Message

The phrase, “We do not lose heart” is found at the beginning and end of the chapter (4:1,16). How does this statement affect the way you read the chapter?

Who is working against the gospel and how does he blind the eyes of people? (4:4)





Outwardly and inwardly what are we doing? (4:16)

What is the difference between the things we can see and those we can't? (4:17-18)

Savor the Scripture

“

⁵ For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. (2 Corinthians 4:5)

-  Circle the words “not” and “but.” (When these two words are used in the same sentence, they often identify the priority of one thing above the other.)
-  Draw a jagged line under “ourselves”
-  Draw a straight line under “Jesus”
-  Draw a square around “we proclaim”

Learn
to live

We die so that Christ can live in us. Describe specific ways that we die. How does this cause Jesus to live in us? (see 4:7-12)

We die so others can live. Describe what this means. How have you done this recently? (see 4:7-12)

How do you think the quote, “I believed, and so I spoke” (4:13) can apply to you?



PREPARE FOR ETERNITY

2 Corinthians 5:1-21

In 2 Corinthians Paul is telling us the real motivation behind his ministry. Paul's goals in preaching were always for God's glory and the salvation of others.

However, sometimes his ministry led him into difficult circumstances when his mind and body were afflicted to their breaking point. Most people would simply give up under such afflictions and trials, but not Paul. How did Paul do it? Why didn't he just throw in the towel? How did he not lose heart?

One reason Paul didn't lose heart was because he didn't forget his destiny! When Paul kept his heavenly goal in mind, the burdens of his life for Christ seemed momentary and light, because the heavenly home he sought was eternal and glorious (4:16-18). Paul elaborates on the glorious nature of his eternal home in 2 Corinthians 5 and his mission to share this hope with others.

The heart of Paul's motivation is in this text. Get this and you get Paul. Believe this and become like Paul.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
5:1-10	
4:11-13	
4:14-17	
4:18-21	

See the Message

What is the condition of the believer between death and resurrection? (5:1-5)

What does this mean to "walk by faith, not by sight"? (5:7)

What is our goal, and why is it our goal? (5:9-10)

How can we be motivated by the “fear of the Lord” and the “love of the Lord” at the same time? (5:11,14)





What does it mean that “we regard no one according to the flesh”? (5:16-17)

How does reconciliation with God occur? (5:21)

Savor the Scripture

“

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

-  Circle the word “if” (The word “if” often identifies a condition/requirement for a promise to be fulfilled)
-  Draw a jagged line under “old” and “passed away”
-  Draw a straight line under “new” and “come”
-  Draw a square around “Therefore”

*Learn
to live*

Paul’s faith was motivated by “the fear of the Lord” and “the love of Christ” (5:11, 14). This motivated him to reconcile people to God. How can these two truths motivate the expression of your faith?

Do the “groans” and “burdens” of your life cause you to think about heaven? (5:1-5) What can you do to think about heaven more?



DEDICATED TO HOLINESS

2 Corinthians 6:1 – 7:1

David said, *“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”* (Psalm 133:1). As much as we enjoy fellowship, it doesn’t just happen. Satan divides. He alienates and isolates. He wrecks families. He destroys friendships. He divides churches. From the beginning he set husband against wife (Gen. 3:12) and turned brother against brother (Gen. 4:7). The landscape of our lives is pitted by his contentious work.

We need a better way to relate to each other. We need the gospel! It teaches us how to *“maintain the unity of the Spirit”* (Eph. 4:3). God has created the unity; we must work hard at maintaining it.

Paul longed to have a pleasant fellowship with the church in Corinth. Yet, the fellowship was fractured! Paul weeps writing, *“you are withholding your affection from us”* (6:12).

Two things were necessary for their fellowship to blossom. First, they must be willing to suffer for the fellowship (6:3-10). Second, they must separate themselves from destructive influences (6:14-7:1). Paul did the first and calls upon the church to do the second—to set themselves apart to God.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
6:1-2	
6:3-10	
6:11-13	
6:14 – 7:1	

See the Message

What are some ways in which people can receive the grace of God in vain? (6:1)

What promise does God make to the person who pursues holiness? (6:16-7:1)

In verses 3-10 Paul describes the effort it takes to “put no obstacle” to salvation in a person’s way. Let’s find them...



No Obstacles to Salvation	
(2 Corinthians 6:3-10)	
Name three trials of a general nature.	
Name three trials inflicted by others.	
Name three trials because of intense work.	
In verses 6-7, describe God's well-equipped servant.	
In verses 8-10, why does Paul use a series of paradoxes?	

List at least four reasons why believers and unbelievers cannot be bound together? (6:14-16)

Savor the Scripture



¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³ In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also. (2 Corinthians 6:11–13)

- Circle the word “but” (The word “but” often highlights a contrast)
-  Draw a jagged line under “restricted”
-  Draw a straight line under “freely” and “wide open”
- Draw a square around “our heart” and “your heart”



Name some specific ways in which we can be a stumbling block to the faith of others? What do you need to do to remove those stumbling blocks from your life?

What does it mean to be “the temple of the living God” and how does that affect how you live with others?



WILLING TO CHANGE

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

What is your picture of a faithful Christian? Is it a person who goes through life in perfect obedience to God, doesn't struggle with anxiety, is never afraid, is always smiling, and energetic? Where does this popular image come from? Some might say, "Doesn't Paul tell us to rejoice always, to praise God without ceasing and to give thanks in everything?" (Phil 4:4; 1 Thess. 5:16,18). Yes, he does.

But those comments need to be balanced with deeply personal and revealing passages like 2 Corinthians 7. In this text, Paul admits that he was in trouble, he had no rest, he was fearful and downcast. But, for Paul, "Having no anxiety," wasn't a matter of attaining some kind of philosophically detached state where he simply didn't care. He cared. He cared passionately.

"Having no anxiety" meant taking every day's anxieties and relying on God's comforts to strengthen him. In addition, he shows the Corinthians their anxieties were relieved by repenting and relying on God's forgiveness. Whether we are in trouble or caused the trouble we must be willing to turn to God to find comfort and forgiveness.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
7:2-7	
7:8-12	
7:13-16	

See the Message

What attitudes and actions did Paul have toward the Corinthians?

Which one means the most to you? (7:2-4)

Why was Paul comforted and encouraged? (7:13-16)

What is the difference between godly grief and worldly grief? (7:8-12)



Record your observations from the text below

Godly Grief	Worldly Grief

Savor the Scripture



¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

- Circle the word “whereas” (The word “whereas” often highlights a contrast)
-  Draw a jagged line under “worldly grief”
-  Draw a straight line under “godly grief”
- Draw a square around “salvation” and “death”



Paul had a deep concern about the spiritual condition of the Corinthians. Do you have that kind of concern for other believers? How can this concern go wrong? How can it be expressed correctly?

Changing requires more than “feeling bad” about something. It requires action in the opposite direction. What do you need to change? What actions will that require?



GENEROUS IN GIVING

2 Corinthians 8:1 – 9:15

One of the important reasons for Paul's third missionary journey was to collect a special "relief offering" for the poor Christians in Judea. Once before Paul had assisted in taking relief to the Judean churches from Antioch (Acts 11:27-30)

Now, Paul is happy to be involved in this kind of relief again. So, he encourages all the churches to be involved in supplying the need of the Judean church. Paul enlisted the help of the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 16:1-3).

Unfortunately, the Corinthians were not doing their part. Like many people, they made promises, but they failed to keep them.

In 2 Corinthians 8-9 Paul encourages the Corinthians to rekindle their desire for the relief effort. Their participation would demonstrate their commitment to Paul and give them an opportunity to express their fellowship with others through sacrificial service.

These chapters teach us how to be generous givers. In other words, they will teach us how to be like Jesus.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
8:1-9	
8:10-15	
8:16-24	
9:1-5	
9:6-15	

See the Message

Why does Paul mention the Macedonian churches in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5?

Why does Paul mention the Macedonian churches in 2 Corinthians 9:1-5?

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul uses no less than six terms to refer to the collection without mentioning the word “money” once. What do each of these terms teach us about giving? *(record your observations below)*





Many Names for Giving (2 Corinthians 8-9)	
Grace (8:1,4,6,7,9,16,19; 9:8,14,15 / 9:11,12)	
Fellowship (8:4; 9:13)	
Ministry (8:4; 9:1,12,13)	
Blessing (9:5,6 – bounty)	
Service (9:12)	
Abundance (8:20)	

Why does Paul go into such detail about how the relief supplies would be delivered to Jerusalem? (7:16-24, especially verse 20)

Savor the Scripture



⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

-  Circle the word “For” (The word “for” indicates we are in the middle of a thought, so we should look at what is written before for)
-  Draw a jagged line under “poor”
-  Draw a straight line under “rich”
-  Draw a square around “you know the grace”



What joy do you get out of giving?

Does your giving have a spiritual purpose? What is it?



OBEDIENT TO CHRIST

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Chapter 10 begins the third and final section of 2 Corinthians. In the first seven chapters Paul explained his ministry to the Corinthians. In chapters 8 & 9 Paul encourages their generosity in giving to the poor saints in Jerusalem.

But beginning in chapter ten the whole tenor of the book changes. So far we have only gotten glimpses of ungodly opposition in Corinth, but now Paul steps toe to toe with them. He answers their criticism and exposes their selfish behavior and sinful motives.

We will see that Paul is vigorously defending himself. We might ask, “Why is this necessary?” Was Paul only concerned about his fan club memberships? Does he just want people to like him?

Of course not. Paul is vigorously defending himself, because if the Corinthians rejected him, they were also rejecting the teachings of Christ. Paul is not so much defending himself. He is enforcing his authority. The authority of Paul’s message is at stake. So, Paul calls the church to be obedient to Christ.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
10:1-6	
10:7-11	
10:12-18	

See the Message

What is the purpose of spiritual conflict? How does spiritual conflict differ from physical conflict? (10:4-5)

God gave Paul authority for what purpose? (10:8)

Why does Paul want the Corinthian's faith to increase and their acceptance of him to be enlarged? (10:15-16)



What points are made concerning "comparisons" and "commendation"? (10:12, 18)

Savor the Scripture



⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

(2 Corinthians 10:5-6)

- Circle the word "and" (The word "and" often adds a new thought)
-  Draw a jagged line under "punish" and "disobedience"
-  Draw a straight line under "captive/complete" and "obey/obedience"
- Draw a square around "destroy" and "punish"



When is it right to defend yourself and when should you "turn the other cheek"? What Biblical ideas help you make that decision?

The "weapons of our warfare" have to do with knowledge and obedience. So, what should we do to make sure our weapons are ready for use?



EMBRACE YOUR WEAKNESS

2 Corinthians 11:1 – 12:10

“You could be the greatest; You can be the best; You can be the King Kong banging on your chest!” these are the lyrics of a culture who loves to boast about its strength! We applaud when people strut. They are good and they let people know it. If you have it, flaunt it.

This attitude of self-promotion was characteristic of the false teachers corrupting the Corinthian church. They bragged about their “letters of recommendation” (3:1), and they ranked themselves by comparing themselves with others (10:12).

But Paul did not play those games. He wrote, ¹⁷ “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” ¹⁸ For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.” (2 Corinthians 10:17–18)

The only boasting Paul would do is in his weaknesses. The fact that God could use such weak people to do his will demonstrated the glory of God that much greater (4:7)! In this section we get an intimate look at the sufferings Paul endured for the gospel. Yet, these sufferings did not discount his connection with God, it deepened it. Our weakness can bring us closer to God, so we can be more useful to God.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
11:1-6	
11:7-15	
11:16-21a	
11:21b-33	
12:1-10	

See the Message

What illustration does Paul use to describe a believer’s relationship with Christ? (11:1-2)

In what way was the spiritual purity of the Corinthians being compromised? (11:3-6, 13-15)

Why did Paul refuse to be financially supported by the Corinthians (11:7-11)

How do you think Paul's list of "boasts" differed from the false believers? (11:16-33) Which item in the list of Paul's boasts impresses you the most?





Why was Paul given a "thorn in the flesh?" (12:7)

Savor the Scripture



⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

(2 Corinthians 12:9)

-  Circle the word "Therefore" (The word "therefore" often identifies an application of a principle previously stated)
-  Draw a jagged line under "weakness"
-  Draw a straight line under "power"
-  Draw a square around "grace" and "boast"

*Learn
to live*

Think of one thing you are pretty good at. How can that be a weakness to you?

Think of a limitation you have. How can that be a strength to you? How does God's grace factor into your answer?



DEVOTED TO THE FELLOWSHIP

2 Corinthians 12:11 – 13:14

The great love Paul had for the church was amazing. He would go to any length to help others have a deeper faith in God.

Several times in 2 Corinthians we saw the physical danger and mental anguish the Apostle Paul endured so that the lost could hear the gospel and saints could be encouraged.

Our lesson today contains an attitude central to Paul's ministry. That lesson is found in verse 19, "We do all things, beloved, for your edification." That was a guiding principle for all that Paul did. His words, actions, and life was aimed at building up the church, strengthening it, and increasing its unity and faith.

Such an attitude should be the noble goal of each member of this church. Our personal motto should be the same, "I do all things for your edification."

The final words of 2 Corinthians impresses us with Paul's unselfish desire that Corinthians serve God with purity and faithfulness. Our task in this lesson will be to evaluate our attitudes about the church by the Apostle Paul's, so that we might learn those attitudes that lead to doing all things for each other's edification.



Spot the Sections

Read through the text and identify the message of each section.

The Section	The Message
12:11-13	
12:14-18	
12:19-21	
13:1-4	
13:5-10	
13:11-14	

See the Message

What were the signs of a true apostle and how were they done? (12:11-13)

What is Paul glad to do for the Corinthians? (12:15)

What was Paul's purpose in writing this letter (12:19; 13:10)





What "warning" does Paul have for the Corinthian church? (13:1-3)

What "test" were the Corinthians to give themselves? (13:5-6)
How could they take this test?

Savor the Scripture

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4 For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. (2 Corinthians 13:4)

-  Circle the words "for" (The word "for" indicates we are in the middle of a thought, so we should look as what is written before for)
-  Draw a jagged line under "weakness"
-  Draw a straight line under "power"
-  Draw a square around "he was" and "we also"

*Learn
to live*

Paul's desire to build up other believers led him to "speak in Christ" (12:19) and "pray" for the weak (13:9). Identify one person this week you can encourage by sharing a thought about Jesus or a prayer on their behalf.

Take a mental "test." How is your faith doing? Is Jesus Christ in you? Anything need to change? Start now...you have 60 seconds. 😊



Love
to learn
& Learn
to live

Satan divides. He alienates and isolates. He wrecks families. He destroys friendships. He divides churches. From the beginning he set husband against wife (Gen. 3:12) and turned brother against brother (Gen. 4:7). The landscape of our lives is pitted by his contentious work.

We need a better way to relate to each other. We need the gospel! In 2 Corinthians Paul applies the principles of the gospel to restore his relationship with a church he deeply and inexplicably loved. His message will strengthen and rescue your relationships.

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³ In return widen your hearts also. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)