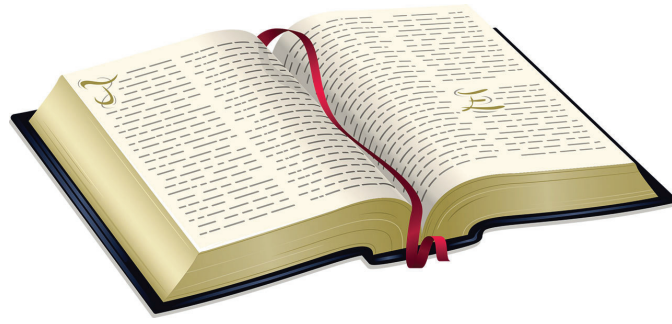


toServe Bible Study LP - 24



2 Corinthians - Lesson 1 of 3

Answer Sheet English Standard Version (ESV)

Chapters 1 - 4

Before beginning this study you should take time to read through 2 Corinthians from beginning to end. This will help you better understand each section in the context of the entire book. While doing the study, read each question carefully, using the given scripture reference to find your answer. May the Lord bless you as you study the book of 2 Corinthians.

INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul

PLACE OF WRITING: Written from somewhere in Macedonia, perhaps Philippi.

DATE OF WRITING: 2 Corinthians was probably written at sometime between 54 and 58 A.D. while Paul was on his third missionary journey. It was probably written 4 to 5 months after 1 Corinthians.

PURPOSE, THEME AND SUBJECT MATTER OF THE LETTER: Corinth was the seat of government for Southern Greece or Achaia. It was noted for its wealth, and for the luxurious, immoral and vicious habits of the people. It had a large mixed population of Romans, Greeks, and Jews. Paul visited Corinth for the first time around the year 51 A.D.

Although Paul's coworker, Timothy, carried the first letter (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16:10), his other companion, Titus, had visited the city since it had been delivered, and reported back to the Apostle about how the church had responded to what Paul had written, and what the general condition of the church was. People had called into question Paul's sincerity because of his delay in visiting them.

2 Corinthians seems to have been written to inform the believers about the reason for Paul's change of plans to visit them. He commends the believers because they apparently had responded to his instructions regarding the man that had been in an immoral relationship (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). There were, however, a number of other concerns that had arisen. Paul defends the authority of his ministry, instructs the believers about financial giving and the collection for the believers in Jerusalem and warns the Corinthians against false apostles.

2 Corinthians has been described as the most personal and emotional of all of Paul's Letters (epistles). It is in this letter that we see a very human side of the great Apostle.

Please memorize the following verse and be prepared to write it out at the end of this lesson.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **2 Corinthians 1:3 – ESV***

Chapter 1

Please read 2 Corinthians - Chapter 1 ☐ Check

1. (v. 1:1) Who is identified as the author of this letter? Paul
2. (v. 1:1) What was Paul's title ? apostle of Christ Jesus
How did he receive it? by the will of God
3. (v. 1:1) Who was with Paul when wrote this epistle / letter? Timothy
4. (v. 1:1) To whom was this letter addressed?
To the church of God that is at Corinth,

5. (v. 1:2) What does Paul wish upon the believers? Grace to you and peace to you from
God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. (v. 1:3) How is God described in this verse?
the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,
7. (v. 1:4) What reason is given for why we are comforted by God?
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.

Understanding 2 Corinthians 1:5

Bible scholars offer several different views on what it means to "share...in Christ's sufferings." Christians may suffer persecution for faith in Christ or preaching about Him. Paul certainly experienced heavy consequences from non-believers. Perhaps this verse about abundant suffering and abundant comfort applies only to those kinds of experiences.

Another possible interpretation is that this verse should be translated differently: to read that as Christ suffered abundantly for us, God's comfort to us will be abundant, as well, through Christ.

Other scholars suggest the phrase means Christians will suffer as Christ suffered while on earth, specifically as He did during the crucifixion. This fits with Paul's teaching that every believer is baptized into Christ's death (Romans 6:3) and that we share in Christ's glory by sharing in His sufferings (Romans 8:17).

Of course, a very small percentage of believers will ever be crucified or even killed for faith in Christ. Instead, the idea is that every Christian lives right now "in Christ." When we suffer, we suffer in Christ. When we hurt, we hurt in Christ. We have opportunities to "suffer as He suffered" in the same way we have opportunities to think as He thought, to speak as He spoke, to become more and more like Him.

In that sense, as we endure abundant suffering as Christ did, we have opportunity to be abundantly comforted as He was comforted by God in His suffering. Whatever specific nuance Paul intended here, none of the above views are anti-biblical. All of them are truthful even independently from this verse, and Paul may have meant any one or more of them.

8. (vs. 1:6-7) What do Paul and the Corinthian believers share / partake?
as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

9. (v. 1:8) What troubles / affliction did Paul and his companions face in Asia?
For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.

10. (v. 1:9) Why did Paul experience these trials?
that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God.

11. (v. 1:10) What did Paul trust that God will do for them?
God delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us.
On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.

12. (v. 1:11) What help did Paul receive from the Corinthian believers?
by prayer

13. (v. 1:11) What happens when prayers are answered?
blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

PAUL'S CHANGE OF PLANS

Note: Paul told the Corinthians in his first letter that he planned to visit them (1 Corinthians 4:19), however, he felt it necessary to change his plans because he knew that he would have to be harsh with them because of the many problems that were in the church. Because he did not come as he said he would, there were some that questioned his integrity and accused him of not being true to his word. In this section Paul defends his character.

15. (vs. 1:15-16) Describe Paul's plan to visit Corinth?
I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia.

16. (v. 1:17) What do you think the Corinthians might have been saying about Paul based on this verse?
do I (Paul) make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say
"Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

17. (v. 1:19) Who are the three that are mentioned that preached to the Corinthians?

1. me (Paul) 2. Silvanus 3. Timothy

18. (v. 1:21) Who is it that enables us / makes us / anointed us with Christ?

God

19. (v. 1:22) (Read Ephesians 1:13-14) **In your own words**, what are some of the descriptions given of the work of the Holy Spirit in these passages?

20. (v. 1:23) Why does Paul say he did not go to Corinth at the original time?

it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth.

21. (v. 1:24) How does Paul tell the Corinthian believers that they will stand firm?

stand firm in your faith.

Chapter 2

Please read 2 Corinthians - Chapter 2 ☐ Check

1. (v. 2:3) When writing to the Corinthians, what does Paul say where his joy comes from?

that my joy would be the joy of you all.

2. (v. 2:4) What was Paul's intention for writing the Corinthians?

to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

FORGIVENESS OF THE SINNER

Note: Although Paul does not say specifically, many believe that 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 is referring to the individual that had sinned by living with his father's wife, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5. Please read 1 Corinthians 5 again to remind yourself of the circumstances regarding that situation.

3. (v. 2:5) Who does Paul say has been grieving the most?

all of you.

4. (v. 2:6) Assuming that Paul is referring in this verse to the instructions he gave the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 5, what is he saying about the punishment that the individual received?

this punishment by the majority is enough,

5. (v. 2:7) What further instructions does Paul give the Corinthian believers?

you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him,

6. (v. 2:8) What more does Paul say regarding the treatment of the repentant sinner?

I beg you to reaffirm your love for Him.

7. (v. 2:9) Why else did Paul write to the Corinthians?

that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything.

8. (v. 2:10) What was Paul's response to the man's repentance? I also forgive.

9. (v. 2:11) **In your own words**, explain what you think Paul means in this verse?

10. (v. 2:12) What did Paul find in Troas? a door was opened for me (Paul) in the Lord,

11. (v. 2:13) Why did Paul not have peace of mind / spirit was not at rest about staying in Troas? because I (Paul) did not find my brother Titus there.

12. (v. 2:13) What did Paul do, since he was not at peace, when he could not find his brother Titus?

I (Paul) took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

Note: This brief comment by Paul shows us that it is often not easy to determine God's specific will for us in every situation. Since a door had been opened for Paul to preach the gospel in Troas it would only make sense to believe it was God's desire for him to stay there and take advantage of the opportunity. Yet because he felt uneasy about not knowing the well-being of his friend and fellow minister, Titus, he decided to move on. If even Paul found himself wondering and unsettled about God's specific will for his life, we should not be surprised if we find ourselves faced with similar questions and uncertainties. After we have determined if a particular decision is within the revealed will of God, e.g. God will never ask us to lie, steal or disobey one of His commandments, we are then left to determine the best choice based on our circumstances and feelings.

13. (v. 2:14) In this verse, what does Paul say God uses us for?

to spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

14. (v. 2:15) How are Christians described to God in this verse?

we are the aroma of Christ to God

15. (v. 2:16) Describe **in your own words** why Paul would say that to one group "we are the aroma of life" and to the other "the aroma of death."

16. (v. 2:17) How does Paul describe his motivation for preaching the gospel?

as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

Chapter 3

Please read 2 Corinthians - Chapter 3 ☐ Check

1. (vs 3:1-3) How does Paul describe the believers as evidence of the effectiveness of his ministry?

you are a letter from Christ delivered by us,
written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God,
not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

2. (v. 3:6) Into what has God made Paul and his companions?

sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit.

3. (v. 3:6) How does Paul describe the work of the Spirit? the Spirit gives life.

To understand this passage, please read Exodus 34: 29-35.

4. (vs. 3:7-10) Use **your own words** to describe the difference between the Old and New Covenants as described in these verses.

5. (v. 3:13) What did Moses do so that the Israelites could not see the glory of the Lord fading from his face? put a veil over his face

6. (vs. 3:14-15) Describe **in your own words** what Paul means by “a veil covering their hearts.”

7. (v. 3:16) When is the veil taken away?

when one turns to the Lord,

8. (v. 3:17) What does the Spirit of the Lord give us?

where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

9. (v. 3:18) This verse uses imagery to help us understand a spiritual truth. Try to explain **in your own words** what Paul is trying to communicate in this verse.

Chapter 4

Please read 2 Corinthians - Chapter 4 ☐

What is the meaning of 2 Corinthians 4:1

In the previous chapter, Paul described the remarkable covenant God has made with those who come to Him through faith in Christ. This new covenant allows human beings to see the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Without Christ, a veil remains between the sin-hardened minds of humans and the ability to see God's glory. Those forgiven for their sin by God's grace, though, are freed from this veil by God's Spirit. As a result, they can look at God's glory with "unveiled faces" and begin to be transformed into the image of Christ as His glory becomes theirs (2 Corinthians 3:17–18).

Paul now returns to defending his ministry to the Corinthians and others. His role is to carry the message of the new covenant to people around the world. Paul insists that he and his co-workers have this ministry, this purpose, by God's mercy.

1. (v. 4:2) What has Paul rejected / renounced?

disgraceful, underhanded ways.

We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word.

2. (v. 4:2) How does Paul describe the way he conducts his ministry?
open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's
conscience in the sight of God.

3. (v. 4:3) To whom is Paul's preaching hidden?
it is veiled to those who are perishing.

4. (v. 4:4) What has the god of this age / world done to those that do not believe the gospel?
has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,

5. (v. 4:4) How is Christ described in this verse?
who is the image of God.

6. (v. 4:5) What is the message that Paul preaches?
but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

7. (v. 4:6) Why did God say / command, "Let light shine out of darkness"?
has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory
of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

8. (v. 4:7) What does having these treasures in these jars of clay show?
to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

9. (vs. 4:8-9) Paul lists several things which happened to him and his companions, but also describes how they are not affected by those hardships. List the hardships and the discouragements they do not experience.

We are...

afflicted

perplexed

persecuted

stuck down

But not...

crushed

despair

forsaken

destroyed

10. In verse 4:11, why does Paul say, *"We who are alive are always being given over / delivered to death for Jesus' sake?"*
so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

11. (v. 4:14) What do we know regarding our resurrection?
knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus

12. (v. 4:15) What may it cause when the grace of God reaches more and more people?
it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

13. (v. 4:16) What is happening outwardly and inwardly to us?
Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

14. (v. 4:17) What do our light and temporary (small and won't last long) trouble gain for us?
an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

15. (v. 4:18) Why should we fix our eyes on things eternal rather than the things we can see?
For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

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ESV ☐, KJV ☐, NIV ☐, NKJV ☐, NLT ☐, Other: _____

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