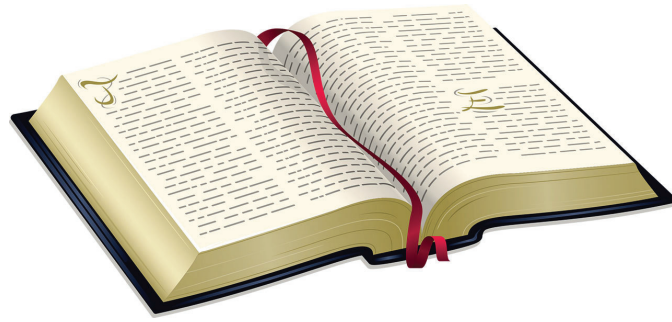


toServe Bible Study LP - 24



2 Corinthians - Lesson 1 of 3

Answer Sheet New Living Translation (NLT)

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 ? an 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 God's church in Corinth,

5. (v. 1:2) What does Paul wish upon the believers? May God our Father and the Lord
Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.
6. (v. 1:3) How is God described in this verse?
God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort
7. (v. 1:4) What reason is given for why we are comforted by God?
that we can comfort others. When they are troubled,
we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

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?
that as you share in our sufferings,
you will also share in the comfort God gives us.

9. (v. 1:8) What troubles / affliction did Paul and his companions face in Asia?

We were crushed and overwhelmed beyond our ability to endure,
and we thought we would never live through it.

10. (v. 1:9) Why did Paul experience these trials?

we stopped relying on ourselves and learned to rely only on God,

11. (v. 1:10) What did Paul trust that God will do for them?

he did rescue us from mortal danger, and he will rescue us again.

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

by them praying for us.

13. (v. 1:11) What happens when prayers are answered?

graciously answered so many prayers for our safety.

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?

first on my (Paul) way to Macedonia and again when I returned from Macedonia.

16. (v. 1:17) What do you think the Corinthians might have been saying about Paul based on this verse?

Do you think I (Paul) am like people of the world who say "Yes" when they really mean "No"?

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

1. me (Paul) 2. Silas 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?

was to spare you from a severe rebuke.

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

by your own faith that you stand firm.

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?

Surely you all know that my joy comes from your being joyful.

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

I (Paul) wanted to let you know how much love 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?

Most of you opposed him, and that was punishment enough.

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

Now, however, it is time to forgive and comfort him.

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

I (Paul) urge you now to reaffirm your love for him.

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

to test you and see if you would fully comply with my instructions.

8. (v. 2:10) What was Paul's response to the man's repentance? I (Paul) forgive him.
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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? the Lord opened a door of opportunity for me (Paul).
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11. (v. 2:13) Why did Paul not have peace of mind / spirit was not at rest about staying in Troas? because my dear brother Titus hadn't yet arrived with a report from you.

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

I (Paul) said good-bye and went on to Macedonia to find him.

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?

he uses us to spread the knowledge of Christ everywhere,

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

Our lives are a Christ-like fragrance rising up 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?

with sincerity and with Christ's authority, knowing that God is watching us.

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 showing the result of our ministry among you.

This "letter" is written not with pen and ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.

It is carved not on tablets of stone, but on human hearts.

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

to be ministers of his new covenant. This is a covenant not of written laws,
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? who 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?

whenever someone turns to the Lord,

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

wherever 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?

all shameful deeds and underhanded methods.

We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God.

2. (v. 4:2) How does Paul describe the way he conducts his ministry?

We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this.

3. (v. 4:3) To whom is Paul's preaching hidden?

only from people 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 those who don't believe.

5. (v. 4:4) How is Christ described in this verse?

who is the exact likeness of God.

6. (v. 4:5) What is the message that Paul preaches?

We preach that Jesus Christ is Lord, and we ourselves are 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 that is seen 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 will be evident in our dying bodies.

11. (v. 4:14) What do we know regarding our resurrection?

know that God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will also raise us with Jesus

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

there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

13. (v. 4:16) What is happening outwardly and inwardly to us?

Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day.

14. (v. 4:17) What do our light and temporary (small and won't last long) trouble gain for us?

Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!

15. (v. 4:18) Why should we fix our eyes on things eternal rather than the things we can see?

For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

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

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