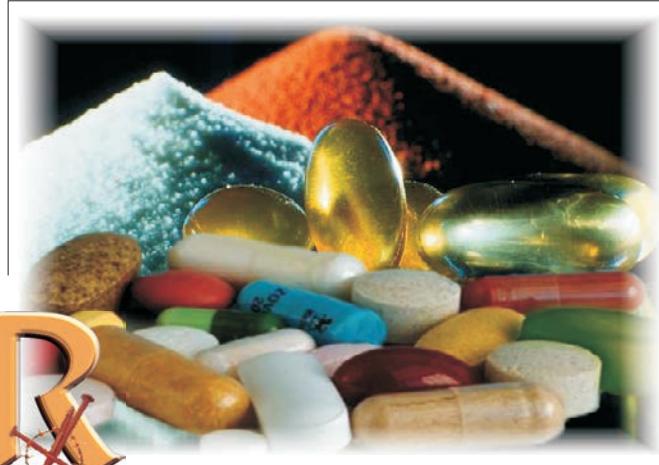


Study Guide

2 Corinthians

Taught by C. W. "Abe" Lincoln



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Prescription for abuses and disorders.

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



SECOND CORINTHIANS



Introductory New Testament Studies

Arranged for study by
Virgil Yocham
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SUNSET
International Bible Institute
EXTERNAL Studies
3710 34th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79410
1(806) 792-5191 • 1(800) 687-2121

The Epistle of Second Corinthians

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without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief
quotations within critical articles and reviews, including translation.

DISCLAIMER

The textbook used in this course was selected because we consider it one of the best and well adapted to this course of study. The College Press NIV Commentary on “**2 Corinthians**” contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of this book. This commentary is a scholarly approach to 2 Corinthians. It will enhance your understanding and appreciation of the contents of 2 Corinthians. As with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I would not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical.

Instructions and Assignments for Level II Students (Non Transferrable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the video tape or the audio tape. Listen to the lecture on the tape as you follow along in the course Study Guide.

There is a **Self-Exam** at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first.

Test: There will be only two test to complete this course. The mid-term test is to be given over the first six (6) lessons, a final test will be given at the end of the study over the last six (6) lessons. (**This will be 90% of your grade**)

Memory Work: Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory on your test in the presence of the administrator. After you have completed the test, correct the memory work with a different colored pen. Or you may quote them to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us.

Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work must be completed to pass this course. You will have fifteen (15) verses to memorize. (**This will be 10% of your grade.**)

Due by Mid-term Test: (8 verses)

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 24; 2:14; 4:13, 16-18

Due by Final Test: (8 verses)

2 Corinthians 5:10, 16-18; 8:9, 21; 12:9; 13:5

Assignments for Level II:

- ▶ All the Self Exams in the Study Guide are to be completed.
- ▶ All the memory verses assigned must be completed, either written or quoted. Eight (8) due for the mid-term, (lessons 1-6), and seven (7) are required before the final test.
- ▶ Level II must obtain a 70% or better on each test to pass this course.
- ▶ All assignments **must be completed and turned in** at the time of the final to pass the course.

Instructions and Assignments for Level III Students (Transferable)

Reading: Read the book of 2 Corinthians four (4) times during this study. The commentary on *2 Corinthians* by College Press is required reading. It must be read in its entirety by the end of this course. You may use this book and other books to help you with papers you may be required to write. A one (1) page evaluation of this book is due and must be submitted with the final exam. (**10% of your grade.**)

Memory Verses: Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory, during the test period, in the presence of the administrator. **After you have completed the test and turned it in**, correct your memory work with a different colored pen. Or you may quote them to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work **must be** completed to pass this course. You will have thirty-seven (36) Bible verses to memorize, all in Second Corinthians. (**10% of your grade.**) Please indicate which version of the Bible you are using in your memorization!

Due by Mid-term: (20 verses)

2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 24	2:6-8, 14-15 4:13-14,16-18	3:17-18 5:10, 14-17
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Due by Final: (16 verses)

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 10:17-18	8:9, 12 12:9, 15	9:6-8 13:5, 11
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Test: There will be two major tests to complete for this course. The mid-term test is to be done at the end of lesson six (6) and the final will at the end of the study, after lesson twelve (12). **All assignments must be finished** by the time of your final test. Each test has to be passed with a 70 or better to pass this course. (**70% of your grade.**)

Research Paper: There will also be a two (2) page commentary to write on Second Corinthians 7:10 concerning “Godly sorrow” and “Worldly sorrow.” Send this paper in with your final test. (**10% of your grade.**)

Notebook: You may want to begin a notebook of material gained in this study. You could include in the notebook:

- a. Notes taken as you view the Study Guide or listen to the taped lectures.
- b. Your returned tests papers and your research/theme papers.
- c. Research and any other material you may have gathered and find important for later use in teaching.

All assignments **must be completed and turned in** at the time of the final exam to pass this course.

Contents

LESSON ONE	Introduction and Scope of Second Corinthians..... (2 Corinthians 1:1-12)	1
LESSON TWO	Paul's Defense of His Person and Ministry..... (2 Corinthians 1:12 - 2:17)	7
LESSON THREE	The Glorious Ministry of the New Covenant. (2 Corinthians 2:14 - 3:18)	13
LESSON FOUR	Courage for the Conflict & Paul's Purpose..... (2 Corinthians 4:1 - 18)	19
LESSON FIVE	Motives for Ministry & the Ministry of Reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:1 - 21)	25
LESSON SIX	The Ministry of Reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17 - 6:10)	31
LESSON SEVEN	An Appeal for Acceptance, Holiness, and Reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 6:11 - 7:12)	37
LESSON EIGHT	The Grace of Giving (I)..... (2 Corinthians 8:1 - 24)	43
LESSON NINE	The Grace of Giving (II). (2 Corinthians 9:1 - 10:1)	49
LESSON TEN	The Question of Authority and Paul's Holy Jealousy..... (2 Corinthians 10:6 - 11:15)	55
LESSON ELEVEN	Paul's Apostolic Authority and Visions and Thorns..... (2 Corinthians 11:16 - 12:10)	61
LESSON TWELVE	Paul's Love and Concern for the Corinthians. (2 Corinthians 12:11 - 12:14)	67

LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF SECOND CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul wrote First Corinthians to correct certain problems that were present in the church. They were (1) those reported to him by members of the household of Chloe and (2) those about which they had written requesting information and instruction.

The second epistle was written to complete the reformation which he had begun through the first letter. Following a brief introduction, it tells (1) about the sincerity of his ministry in their behalf, and defends his change of plans that had caused him to delay his return visit to Corinth; (2) it gives further instruction about completing the offering for the saints in Judea; and, (3) it defends his apostleship against the claims of those whom he called false apostles (11:13-15).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:1-12

LESSON AIM: To introduce the book and study Paul's introductory remarks to the Corinthians in chapter 1 verses 1-12.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn the purpose, date of writing and the recipients of the book of 2 Corinthians.
 2. Learn a short three-point outline of the book.
 3. See how Paul introduces himself and the letter by discussing the relationship between suffering and comfort.
-

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND CORINTHIANS

A. The Writer of Second Corinthians

1. Paul refers to himself by name (v. 1). *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother.*
2. The letter, style and vocabulary is Pauline.
3. The external evidence for his genuineness is very, very strong.
 - a. Polycarp, a pupil of the apostle John who lived 69 to 156 A.D. quotes from the book of Second Corinthians.
 - b. Irenius and Tertullian also quote from this letter.
4. Timothy joins Paul in the salutation, which shows that he was with Paul at

the time of writing.

B. The Purpose of the Epistle

1. To explain his ministry, Paul describes the kind of ministry that one has in the new covenant.
 - a. In this section Paul will clear up some of the misunderstandings about his intended visit.
 - b. How he dealt with a penitent man about whom we will read in 2 Corinthians chapter 2.
2. He will discuss his glorious ministry.
3. A plea for the church to complete their giving as they had purposed (chapters 8-9).
4. A defense of Paul's apostleship and an expose of these lying or false apostles (chapters 10-13). Paul will give at least four proofs of his being an apostle of Christ.
 - a. In the first place he will say that the Lord appointed him (2 Corinthians 10:8 and 13:10).
 - b. Then he will make reference to his successful labors as an apostle (chs. 3 and 11).
 - c. Paul will also allude to his special revelations, the first ten verses of chapter 12.
 - d. And then he will make reference to the signs of an apostle being his credentials (2 Corinthians 12:12).

NOTE: When Paul writes to the church, chapters 1 through 9, he is very, very tender and loving and affectionate. He is referring to the majority of the brethren who were striving to be faithful to Christ. But when dealing with the false teachers beginning in chapter 10 to the end of the book, Paul could become very strong and even severe.

C. The Book Divided into Three Sections (Three point outline.)

1. The obedience of the Corinthians to the instructions of the first epistle (chapters 1-7).
 - a. In chapter 1 we will see that Paul introduces himself and some of the experiences that he had even in Asia.
 - b. Paul will talk about his burdens that he had for the church and some of the other experiences that he had in the gospel.
 - c. He will describe his consolation and excitement in his ministry in and for the Lord.
2. The collection for the Judean Christians (chapters 8-9).
3. The vindication of his apostolic authority (chapters 10-13).
 - a. Paul will deal with the false teachers beginning in chapter 10.

- b. In the last few verses of chapter 13 we have the farewell that Paul gives, and one of the greatest benedictions of the New Testament.

D. The Date of Writing - About 55-57 A.D.

E. The Design of the Book

- 1. To apply suitable remedies to the disorders and abuses which had crept into the church.
- 2. To answer questions they had written about.

THE FATHER OF MERCIES AND GOD OF ALL COMFORT

A. Paul's Gracious Salutation (vs.1-2)

- 1 The writer Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God.
- 2 The persons addressed:
 - a. The church of God, the one at Corinth.
 - b. The Saints in the whole of Achaia. Three churches in Achaia:
 - 1) The church at Corinth (Acts 18).
 - 2) The church at Athens (Acts 17).
 - 3) The church at Cenchrea (Acts 18).
- 3. Salutation: Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. Paul's Foundation of Gratitude (vs. 3-11)

- 1. God identified and praised (v. 3). He is to be praised because:
 - a. He is the God and Father of our Lord.
 - b. He is the merciful Father.
 - c. He is the God of all comfort - the compassionate God.
 - 1) Comfort - (Greek - *para*, along side of and *choleo*, to call or summon into one's presence.
 - 2) Thus God will assist us, help us and strengthen us - He will stand by our side.
- 2. How God comforts us (comfort found 10 times in vs. 3-7).
 - a. By His presence (Psalm 46:1).
 - b. Through His word (Romans 15:4; 2 Thessalonians 4:18).
 - c. Through His servants (2 Corinthians 7:5).
 - d. Through time.
- 3. He explains why God had comforted him (v. 4). The aim of adversity or pressure is to strengthen us.
 - a. To enable him to comfort others in affliction.
 - b. To comfort others by means of the comfort God had showed him.
- 4. He explains the relation between suffering and comfort (vs. 5-7).
 - a. Just as the suffering of Christ came upon Paul, so the comfort that Paul experienced came through Christ.

- b. His affliction was for their comfort and salvation.
 - c. Paul's comfort was to comfort them and help them endure their sufferings.
 - d. As they had shared in the suffering so they would share in the comfort (v. 7).
5. He tells them about his affliction in Asia (vs. 8-11).
- a. Its intensity: It was so severe that he often despaired of life.
 - b. His attitude toward it: He put his trust in God who raises the dead (v. 9). See also Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-5.
 - c. His confidence: God will deliver us.
 - d. His deliverance: it is a gift from God.
 - 1) Prayers of the church had helped.
 - 2) It had resulted in many thanksgiving to God from many people.

C. Paul Is Not Unreliable (1:12-24)

Paul explains why he has delayed coming to Corinth: To spare them possible sorrow. (This discussion will be in the next lesson.)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE

1. Give four (4) things which reflect Pauline authorship of Second Corinthians.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. What are four (4) proofs presented by Paul of the authenticity of his apostleship?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. Second Corinthians is divided into three (3) sections. What are these?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. List four (4) ways in which God gives comfort.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

5. Give the approximate date of the writing of Second Corinthians._____

6. Give the two-fold design of Second Corinthians.
1) _____

2) _____

LESSON TWO

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS PERSON AND MINISTRY

INTRODUCTION

Paul's first order of business after his salutation and thanksgiving is to offer a defense of his integrity. He begins with a profession of sincerity and simplicity, both in his conduct and his writing, and then reminds them that they will have good reason to boast in each other when Christ comes (vs. 12-14). Evidently his sincerity had come in question because Paul had made a change of plans concerning his visit to them. Therefore he explains that his change was not due to fickleness, but as God and His promises in Christ are trustworthy, so is Paul, for God has anointed and sealed him with the Holy Spirit (vs. 15-22). With God as his witness, Paul states that his change of plans was an effort to spare them. This is not to suggest Paul exercises some sort of domination over them, for he considers himself as a fellow worker for their joy (vs. 23-24).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 1:12 - 2:17

LESSON AIM: To see Paul's heart-felt love for the Corinthians as he explains his actions in his planned visits to Corinth.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn that Paul's relationship to the Christians in Corinth was based upon a good conscience and sincerity and not on double-talk.
 2. See that Paul's visit was delayed because of his love and concern for them.
 3. Examine the relationship the church has toward repentant sinners who have had Christian fellowship withdrawn from them.
-

Paul continues to defend his integrity by explaining that his change of plans was an effort to prevent his coming to them in sorrow. Indeed, his previous letter was written for the same reason, and with much anguish of heart (2:1-4). Speaking of grief, he reminds them that the one who caused most of it had properly repented after their disciplinary actions, and they should be careful to forgive and comfort the

person. Paul himself was willing to forgive the penitent offender, because he knew how Satan could easily take advantage of their situation (2:5-11).

He then reveals the anxiety of trying to find Titus, which prompted his leaving an open door in Troas to go on to Macedonia (12-13). He will return to the subject of finding Titus and the comfort he received upon doing so (7:5-7), but at this point Paul begins vindicating his ministry as an apostle of Christ. With thanks to God, Paul describes the triumphant nature of his ministry, in which God leads him as in a victory procession. Carrying the imagery of a victory procession a little further (in which it was common to have incense as part of the parade), Paul views himself and his work as the fragrance of Christ which to those being saved is an aroma of life, but to those who are perishing it is an aroma of death (14-16b). Realizing his own insufficiency for such things, he speaks not as those who peddle the Word of God, but with sincerity and with an awareness that it comes from God, and is in the sight of God (16c-17).

PAUL DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY (1: 12-24)

A. His Defense of His Integrity (vs. 12-14)

1. His conduct toward them. In good conscience he has conducted himself with simplicity and godly sincerity toward them, and continues to do so in his writing to them (vs.12-13a).
 - a. His conduct (v.12) - Holy and sincere manner before God.
 - b. His writing (vs. 13-14) - He meant by his writing exactly what they were reading.
2. His hope for them. He hopes they understand that they have reason to boast in each other when the Lord returns (vs. 13b-14).

B. His Defense of Changed Travel Plans (vs. 15-22)

1. His original plan. To visit them on his way to Macedonia, and on his return trip back to Judea (vs. 15-16).
 - a. To come to Corinth, then go on to Macedonia and return to Corinth.
 - b. This second visit would have proved his kindly feeling for them.
 - c. For them to help him on his way to Judea. ...*to have you send me on my way...*
2. His defense against anticipated objections (vs. 17-22).
 - a. It was not done according to the flesh, in an unreliable manner (v. 17).
 - 1) In planning this he didn't use levity.
 - 2) He didn't make plans according to the flesh as men do.
 - 3) His plans were subject to, "If the Lord permits."
 - 4) His plans were based on the principle that God is trustworthy.

NOTE: Paul was accused of following fleshly wisdom (1:12), of being careless with the will of God (1:17), and of making plans just to please himself. They were saying if Paul says or writes one thing, he really means another! His yes is no, and his no is yes.

- b. But as God is faithful, and the promises of God in Jesus are reliable, so were his words to them (vs. 18-20). Arguments proving him trustworthy (vs. 19-21).
 - 1) Based on the reference to his preaching.
 - 2) Based on God's promises.
 - 3) Based on God's approval of Paul's ministry.
- c. Indeed, Paul (along with Silvanus and Timothy) has been. . .
 - 1) Established with them in Christ and anointed by God (v. 21).
 - 2) Sealed by God, and given the Spirit in their hearts as a deposit (v. 22).

C. The Plain Reason for the Delayed Visit (vs. 23-24)

- 1. To spare them, as God can confirm (v. 23).
- 2. This is not to suggest an attitude of domination over them, for he views himself as one working for their joy, and he acknowledges that they stand on the basis of their faith (v. 24).
 - a. We do not have Lordship over your faith; we are fellow-workers with your joy.
 - b. You stand in your own faith - in your relation to Christ.

THOUGHT PROVOKERS

1. Paul states in verses 12 through 14 that there are:
 - a. No hidden actions in his life.
 - b. No hidden motives in his life.
 - c. No hidden meanings in his words.
2. Conscience - joint knowledge, a knowing with, a co-knowledge with oneself. Our English word *conscience* comes from two Latin words: *com*, meaning with, and *scire*, meaning to know. Conscience is that inner faculty that knows with our spirit and approves when we do right, but accuses when we do wrong.
3. Paul had changed his plans but it was for a good purpose.
4. By the faithfulness of God, Paul was not saying yes and meaning no.
5. Seal - an emblem of ownership and security of destination.
6. Earnest - only here (v. 22), in 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14. It means caution-money, deposited by a purchaser in pledge of full payment. It is that part of the purchase money paid in advance, as a security for the remainder.
7. Of the Spirit - the earnest which is the Spirit. Not a pledge given by the Spirit but the Spirit himself given by God as the pledge.

8. *I call God as my witness* is an oath of truthfulness. Affirm and swear mean the same (Hebrews 6:16).

PAUL'S DEFENSE OF HIS INTEGRITY CONTINUES (2:1-13)

A. The Reason for His Delay (vs. 1-4)

1. He was determined not to come to them again in sorrow (vs. 1-2).
2. The purpose and nature of writing 1 Corinthians. He wrote his previous letter in sorrow, out of affliction, anguish of heart and many tears. He did so not to cause sorrow but to show his abundant love for them.

NOTE: In heaviness refers to the sorrow which his coming would bring to the church. Paul's own joy is bound up with the spiritual prosperity of the church.

B. Restoration of the Penitent Offender (vs. 5-11)

1. Speaking of sorrow, much of their grief was caused by one man (v. 5).
2. However, their discipline was effective and the penitent offender should be forgiven and reassured of their love for him (vs. 6-8).
 - a. The extent of the sorrow caused: **To Paul and all**.
 - b. The extent of the punishment: **It was by the many and was sufficient**.
 - c. The success of the punishment: **Repentance, forgiveness and comfort**.
 - d. The reception of the offender by the church in three areas:
 - 1) **Forgiveness by the church**.
 - 2) **Comfort of renewed fellowship**.
 - 3) **Confirmation of Love**.
 - e. The proof of their faithfulness: **Obedience in ALL things**.
 - f. Such forgiveness would prevent Satan from gaining an advantage over them.
3. His previous letter was a test of their obedience, and he is willing to forgive those they have forgiven, lest Satan take advantage of their situation (vs. 9-11).

C. His Concern for Them (vs. 12-13)

1. In Troas, the Lord had given him an open door to preach the gospel (v. 12).
2. But with no word from Titus, anxiety for their situation prompted him to leave for Macedonia (v. 13).

THE TRIUMPHANT NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (14-17)

This will be discussed in our next lesson.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO

1. What are the four (4) points Paul uses to defend his plans against anticipated objections?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. What was the plain reason Paul delayed his visit to Corinth?

3. Define and explain the following:

Seal _____

Earnest _____

Conscience _____

4. Complete the following concerning the erring brother.

The extent of the sorrow caused _____.

The extent of the punishment _____.

The success of the punishment _____.

The reception of the offender by the church in three areas:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

The proof of their faithfulness _____.

5. How was Paul's anxiety for the Corinthian Christians manifested while he was in Troas?

LESSON THREE

THE GLORIOUS MINISTRY OF THE NEW COVENANT

INTRODUCTION

It appeared in Asia that Paul's plans had completely fallen apart. Where was Titus? What was going on at Corinth? Paul had open doors of ministry at Troas, but he had no peace in his heart to walk through those doors. Humanly speaking, it looked like the end of the battle, with Satan as the victor. Except for one thing: Paul had a conquering faith! Paul was sure that God was leading him (v.14a), that God was leading him in triumph (v. 14b), and that He was using him as He was leading him (vs. 14c-17).

Having just begun vindicating his ministry as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul reminds the Corinthians that he really needs no letter of accreditation, for they are his epistles of commendation. Through his ministry, in which he had written upon their hearts with the Spirit of the living God, they themselves have become an epistle of Christ (3:1-3). This he says, with full realization that it is God who has made him sufficient as a minister of the new covenant, which is a ministry of the Spirit who gives life (vs. 4-6).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:18

LESSON AIM: To learn that a Christian servant's commendation comes from God and not men.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Be able to describe the Roman Triumph and explain how Paul used it to depict the victory God gives His faithful children.
 2. Learn that Paul's ministry is legitimate and accredited by God Himself.
 3. See the glorious nature of Paul's ministry of the New Covenant.
-

Paul then proceeds to contrast the new covenant with the old covenant, to illustrate the glorious nature of his ministry. With Exodus 34:29-35 as his reference, he equates the glory of the old covenant with the glory on Moses' face that was temporary. But if the old covenant, described as one of death and condemnation, had

glory, then how much more glorious is the new covenant, a ministry of the Spirit and of righteousness which is not passing away (vs. 7-11)!

Paul then declares that those who listen only to the Old Testament still have a veil on their hearts (vs. 12-15). But when we turn to the Lord (whom Paul equates with the Spirit), the veil is taken away and there is liberty. Also, by beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled faces, we are being transformed into the same glorious image by the Spirit of the Lord (vs. 16-18).

THE TRIUMPHANT NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (2:14-17)

A. Through Christ Victory is Given to Paul (v. 14a)

Paul had a conquering faith:

1. He was sure that God was leading him (v. 14a).
2. He was sure that God was leading him in triumph (v. 14b).
3. He was sure that God was using him as He was leading him (vs. 14c-17).
 - a. Paul expresses thanksgiving to God.
 - b. The reason: for leading them in a triumphal procession similar to that enjoyed by a military leader after a victory.

In William Barclay's Commentary on 2 Corinthians it is well depicted (The Letters to the Corinthians, William Barclay, pgs 204-205).

"In Paul's mind there is the picture of a Roman *Triumph* and of Christ as a universal conqueror. The highest honour which could be given to a victorious Roman general was a Triumph. Before he could win it he must satisfy certain conditions. He must have been the actual commander-in-chief in the field. The campaign must have been completely finished, the region pacified and the victorious troops brought home. Five thousand of the enemy at least must have fallen in one engagement. A positive extension of territory must have been gained, and not merely a disaster retrieved or an attack repelled. And the victory must have been won over a foreign foe and not in a civil war. In an actual Triumph the procession of the victorious general marched through the streets of Rome to the Capitol in the following order. First, there came the state officials and the senate. Then there came the trumpeters. Then there were carried the spoils taken from the conquered land. For instance, when Titus conquered Jerusalem the seven-branched candlestick, the golden table of the shew-bread and the golden trumpets were carried through the streets of Rome. Then there came pictures of the conquered land and models of conquered citadels and ships. There followed the white bull for the sacrifice which would be made. Then there walked the wretched captives, the enemy princes, leaders and generals in chains, shortly to be flung into prison and in all probability almost immediately to be executed. Then there came the lictors bearing their rods, followed by the musicians with their lyres. Then

there came the priests swinging their censers with the sweet-smelling incense burning in them. And then there came the general himself. He stood in a chariot drawn by four horses. He was clad in a purple tunic embroidered with golden palm leaves, and over it a purple toga marked out with golden stars. In his hand he held an ivory sceptre with the Roman eagle at the top of it, and over his head a slave held the crown of Jupiter. After him there rode his family, and finally there came the army wearing all their decorations and shouting *Io triumphe!* their cry of triumph. As the procession moved through the streets, all decorated and garlanded, amid the shouting, cheering crowds, it was a tremendous day, a day which might happen only once in a lifetime. That is the picture that is in Paul's mind."

B. Through Them Fragrance Is Diffused to Others (vs. 14b-17)

1. God diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place (v. 14b).
2. To God, they are the fragrance of Christ (v. 15).
3. To those who are perishing, they are an aroma of death (v. 16a).
 - a. Noah condemned the world through his preaching (Hebrews 11:7).
 - b. Jeremiah was alone in his preaching which condemned the people of his time (Jeremiah chapters 5, 11).
 - c. The truth preached exposes sin for what it really is (John 3:19).
4. To those who are being saved, they are an aroma of life (v. 16b).

C. Through God Sufficiency is Given (vs. 16c-17; 3:4)

Paul realizes his dependency upon God for sufficiency to be such things.

1. Unlike many, who peddle the Word of God (v. 17a). The word peddle signifies a huckster who is marketing something dishonestly, for a profit.
2. In contrast, he speaks sincerely, as from God, and in the sight of God (v. 17b). Sincerity - pure as tested by sunlight.

THE ACCREDITED NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (3:1-3)

A. Paul Has No Need for Letters of Commendation (v. 1)

1. He does not mean by his words to commend himself (v. 1a).
2. For Paul does not need, as might others, letters of recommendation (v. 1b).
 - a. The Judaizers boasted letters of recommendation (v.1).
 - b. From the important people in the Jerusalem church.
 - c. They pointed out that Paul had no such credentials.

B. The Corinthians Are Paul's Epistles of Commendation (vs. 2-3)

1. They are evidence of his handiwork, which all can know and read (v. 2).
2. They are an epistle of Christ, upon whose hearts Paul has written with the Spirit of the living God (v. 3).
 - a. The Law is an external thing, and people need an *internal* power if their lives are to be transformed.

- b. The ministry of grace changes the heart.
- c. The Spirit of God uses the Word of God and writes it on the heart.
- 3. The Corinthians were wicked sinners when Paul came to them, but his ministry of the Gospel of God's grace completely changed their lives (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

NOTE: The test of ministry is changed lives, not press releases or statistics.

THE GLORIOUS NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (vs. 4-18)

A. His Trust and Sufficiency Is from God (vs. 4-6)

- 1. Paul's insufficiency. His trust is not based upon confidence in himself, but in Christ and the sufficiency that God provides (vs. 4-5).
- 2. Paul's ministry. God has made him sufficient as a minister of the new covenant (v. 6).
 - a. A covenant of the Spirit, not of the letter.
 - b. A covenant that gives life, not death

B. The Glory of the New Covenant (vs. 7-18)

- 1. In contrast with the Old Covenant, written and engraved on stones (vs. 7-11).
 - a. The ministry of death versus the ministry of the Spirit (vs. 7-8).
 - b. The ministry of condemnation versus the ministry of righteousness (vs. 9-10).
 - c. That which is passing away versus that which remains (v. 11).
- 2. In comparison with the Lawgiver, Moses (vs. 12-16).
 - a. With the more glorious nature of the new covenant, Paul could speak with great boldness (v. 12).
 - b. With the reading of Moses (the Old Testament), however, a veil remains on the heart (vs. 12-15).
 - 1) An allusion to the events of Exodus 34:29-35.
 - 2) With the veil on Moses' face, the children of Israel could not see that the glory of his face was fading (v. 13).
 - 3) Israel's inability to see then is like their inability today, unless they come to Christ (vs. 14-15).
 - c. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed, just as Moses did when he returned to the presence of the Lord (v. 16).

NOTE: Paul affirmed that the glory of the New Covenant of grace was far superior to the Old Covenant of Law and gave several reasons to support his affirmation.

- The New Covenant glory means spiritual life, not death (vs. 7-8).
- The New Covenant glory means righteousness, not condemnation (vs. 9-10).

- The New Covenant glory is permanent, not temporary (v. 11).
3. Summary explanation (vs. 17-18).
- a. Paul explains that the Lord of verse 16 is the Spirit of the Lord, who provides liberty (v. 17).
 - b. When we (like Moses) are able to behold with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord transforms us into the same image (v. 18).

SUMMARY

The lure of legalism is still with us. There are Gospel-preaching churches that have legalistic tendencies and keep their members immature, guilty, and afraid. They spend a great deal of time dealing with the externals, and they neglect the cultivation of the inner life. They exalt standards and they denounce sin, but they fail to magnify the Lord Jesus Christ. Sad to say, ***in some New Testament churches we have an Old Testament ministry.***

Paul has now explained two aspects of his own ministry: it is triumphant (chapters 1-2) and it is glorious (chapter 3). The two go together: *Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not* (4:1).

When your ministry involves the glory of God, you cannot quit!

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE

1. Of what three (3) things was Paul sure?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

2. Fill in the blanks:

To those who are perishing they are an_____
To those who are being saved, they are an_____

3. What three (3) contrasts are given in vs. 7-11 between the ministry of the Old and the New?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. Give three (3) reasons that the glory of the New Covenant of grace is superior to the Old Covenant of Law.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

LESSON FOUR

COURAGE FOR THE CONFLICT - PAUL'S PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION

Paul continues his defense of himself and his ministry. With such a glorious ministry described in chapter three, he does not get discouraged. Instead he has renounced the use of deceitful tactics and openly proclaims the truth (4:1-2). If the gospel seems veiled, it is only to those whom Satan has blinded so they might not see the light of the gospel (vs. 3-4). Paul is simply preaching Christ Jesus as Lord and considers himself as a servant for their sakes. He humbly realizes that it is God who has shone in his heart so he might share that light of the gospel with others (vs. 5-6).

As magnificent as this treasure may be, he is simply an earthen vessel. As such he experiences great suffering in his ministry, but he knows that God allows it so that the life of Jesus (the power of God) might be manifested in his mortal body by the way he endures it, and that such grace from God might cause much thanksgiving to the glory of God (vs. 7-15). In addition, he does not lose heart because his inward man is renewed daily by the knowledge that affliction is light and temporary compared to the eternal weight of glory that awaits him, and by keeping his focus on things which are unseen but eternal (vs. 16-18).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

LESSON AIM: To learn that a Christian's circumstances must not cause him/her to become discouraged in his/her service to Christ.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn to appreciate Paul's transparency and view of service.
 2. Understand why some people are so blinded to the obvious.
 3. Gain insight into why God allows His children to suffer.
 4. Discover Paul's secret for not losing heart (getting discouraged).
-

THE HONEST NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (4:1-6)

Paul delivers with clearness and frankness his message of Christ the true light.

A. The Hidden Things of Shame Renounced (vs. 1-2)

1. Having received a glorious ministry by the mercy of God, *Paul does not lose heart* (v. 1).
2. *He had renounced the hidden things of shame* (v. 2a).
 - a. He does not walk in craftiness.
 - b. He does not handle the Word of God deceitfully.
3. *He commends himself before all and before God with open presentation of the truth* (v. 2b).

NOTE: It was Paul's determination to persevere (v.1).

- It was Paul's purpose to be honest (v.2). Deception, distort - to ensnare, to corrupt. Used of adulterating gold, wine, etc.
- It was Paul's purpose to serve the truth (vs.3-4).
- It was Paul's purpose to speak to be understood (vs.3-4).
- It was Paul's purpose to preach Christ (v.5-6).

B. The Gospel Veiled Only to the Perishing (vs. 3-4)

1. If the gospel seems veiled, it is only the perishing who think it so (v. 3).
 - a. The fault lies with the hearers, not with the preacher.
 - b. Those who are perishing in verse 3 are the same as the unbelieving in verse 4.
2. For their unbelieving minds have been blinded by the God of this age (v. 4a).
 - a. Satan keeps lost sinners in the dark.
 - b. Satan uses *religious* teachers (like the Judaizers) to deceive people.
3. So that the light of the gospel of the glorious Christ does not shine on them (v. 4b).

C. Proclaiming Christ as Lord, and Themselves as Servants (vs. 5-6)

1. Preaching not themselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and themselves as their servants for Jesus' sake (v. 5).
 - a. The Judaizers enjoyed preaching about themselves and glorying in their achievements (2 Corinthians 10:12-18).
 - b. They were not servants who tried to help people; they were dictators who exploited people.
 - c. Paul practiced genuine humility.
 - 1) He did not trust in himself (1:9).
 - 2) He did not commend himself (3:1-5).
 - 3) He did not preach himself (4:5).
2. It is God who has shone in their hearts so that they might spread the light of the knowledge of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ (v. 6).

THE SUFFERING NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (4:7-18)

A. Suffering Permitted to Demonstrate the Life of Jesus (vs. 7-15)

1. The treasure of the gospel is in earthen vessels, but this is so the excellence of God's power might be demonstrated in them (v. 7).
2. Examples of overcoming suffering (vs. 8-9)
 - a. Hard pressed on every side - yet not crushed.
 - b. Perplexed - but not in despair.
 - c. Persecuted - but not forsaken.
 - d. Struck down - but not destroyed.
 - 1) God permits trials.
 - 2) God controls trials.
 - 3) God uses trials for His own glory.
3. In this way, dying for Jesus gives them opportunity to demonstrate the life of Jesus, which in turn blesses others (vs. 10-12).
4. Confident of the resurrection and ultimate glorification, he knows that all things can be to their benefit, resulting in thanksgiving and glory to God (vs. 13-15).

CONSIDER

1. His bodily weakness does not annul the effects of his ministry (verses 7-15).
 - a. Paul's weakness of body serves to manifest the greatness of God's power (v.7).
 - b. The glory of the ministry even in the midst of weakness and suffering (vs.8-10).
 - c. Verses 10-11 convey to us the conception of the intimate union in suffering between Christ and the Christian (cf. 1:5).
 - d. This union in suffering involves a present manifestation in us of the Life of Christ, as well as ultimate union with Him in glory.
2. Paul's ministry was carried on in the spirit of faith (vs. 13-15).
 - a. His faith was like that of the psalmist who said, *I believed, therefore I spoke.*
 - b. His faith was in God who raised up Christ and would raise him up also (v. 14).
 - c. His ministry of faith was for their sakes so that God might be glorified (v.15).
3. Paul quotes from the psalmist (Psalms 116:10) and declares that he and his helpers have the same spirit of faith and trust that characterized the Old Testament writer.
 - a. It is a spirit that speaks because it believes.
 - b. It is a spirit that defies danger of every kind.
 - c. It is a spirit that cannot maintain silence.

4. The reason these men speak with such confidence: Belief in the resurrection and being presented with the Corinthians to God.
5. The *all things* of verse 15 have reference to the hardships which he and his fellow workers were willing to endure.
 - a. It was for the sake of the people to whom they ministered.
 - b. It was for the greater glory of God.

B. Affliction Produces an Eternal Weight of Glory (vs. 16-18)

These three verses will be discussed on tape in Lesson Five.

1. He is not discouraged, even when the outward man is perishing, for the inward man is renewed daily (v. 16).

*Yard by yard, life is hard!
Inch by inch, life's a cinch!*

2. Affliction is light and temporary, compared with the eternal weight of glory (v. 17).
3. His focus is on the unseen, on things that are eternal (v. 18). The great men and women of faith, mentioned in Hebrews 11, achieved what they did because they saw the invisible (Hebrews 11:10, 13-14, 27).

NOTE: The assurances Paul had because of his faith:

- He was sure of ultimate victory (v. 14).
- He was sure God would be glorified (v. 15).
- He was sure his trials were working for him, not against him (vs.16-17).
- He was sure the invisible world was real (v. 18).

REVIEW

As we review this section of 2 Corinthians, we can see how Paul had courage for the conflict and would not lose heart.

- He had a glorious ministry that transformed lives.
- He had a valuable treasure in the earthen vessel of his body, and he wanted to share that treasure with a bankrupt world.
- He had a confident faith that conquered fear.
- He had a future hope that was both a destination and a motivation (5:1-8).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR

1. In verses 1 and 2 what three (3) things are said about Paul's ministry?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

2. In verses 1 through 6 what five (5) things are stated about Paul's determination and purpose?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

3. What is the cause of the gospel being veiled from the perishing?

4. What are three (3) truths about trials which empowers Christians to live through them?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

5. List four (4) assurances Paul had because of his faith.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

6. How is affliction pictured in 4:17?

LESSON FIVE

MOTIVES FOR MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION

As Paul continues describing the nature of his ministry, he explains why he remains hopeful in spite of his suffering. He knows that should his earthly house be destroyed, there is a house not made with hands that God has prepared for him. For this he longs, being confident because God has already given the Spirit as a guarantee. So while he must walk by faith, and not by sight, he makes it his aim to be pleasing to the Lord, before Whom he knows he will one day stand to give an account (vs. 1-10).

Paul then describes his devotion as it pertains to his ministry. Motivated by his knowledge of the terror of the Lord, he persuades men. He endeavors to serve God and his brethren in such a way that the Corinthians will be able to provide a defense to those who judge only by appearance. Throughout it all, it is the love of Christ which constrains Paul to live no longer for himself but for the Lord. Unlike his detractors, he no longer judges people based upon appearances, for he knows that if one is in Christ, he is a new creation (vs. 11-17).

Finally, Paul depicts the work of God in Christ as one in which God is reconciling the world to Himself. Paul's own role is that of an ambassador for Christ, who has been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation so he might implore people on God's behalf that they be reconciled to God (vs. 18-21).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 5:1-21

LESSON AIM: To see the nature of and motives for Paul's ministry and how our ministries compare with Paul's ministry.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn of the great hope Christians have in serving in the kingdom and the fruit that it bears.
 2. See the devoted nature of Paul's ministry and the motivation for that devotion.
 3. See that Paul's ministry was a reconciling ministry designed to bring men back to God through Christ.
-

THE HOPEFUL NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (5:1-10)

The heavenly desire.

Paul's expectation of a glorified body hereafter and his desire to be with Christ.

A. The Promise of a Building from God (vs. 1-5)

1. Our future house. An unearthly house - not made with hands, to replace the earthly tent (v. 1).
 - a. A permanent dwelling - in contrast to the earthly, mortal body.
 - b. An eternal dwelling - in contrast to the temporary.
 - b. A heavenly dwelling - in contrast to the one that is for this earth.
2. Our present house. A house of groaning. In this earthly tent we groan - we have pain and distress (vs. 2-4).
 - a. Desiring to be clothed - with the habitation from heaven (v. 2).
 - b. Desiring not to found naked.
 - c. Desiring that mortality be swallowed up by life (vs. 3-4).
3. A house of preparation. God has prepared us for this very thing, and has given His Spirit as a guarantee (v. 5).

B. What this Promise Produces in Paul (vs. 6-10)

1. Courage and confidence (vs. 6-8).
 - a. What we know. At home in the body means absence from the Lord, necessitating walking by faith and not by sight (vs. 6-7).
 - b. What we prefer. To be absent from the body and present with the Lord (v. 8).
2. An aim to be well pleasing to Christ (vs. 9-10).
 - a. Whether present or absent (v. 9).
 - b. For we must all be judged by Christ (v. 10). Because of the gracious work of Christ on the cross, believers will not face their sins (John 5:24; Romans 8:1).
 - 1) The judgment seat of Christ will be a place of *revelation*.
 - 2) It will be a place of *reckoning* as we give an account of our ministries (Romans 14:10-12).
 - 3) For the faithful it will be a place of *reward* and *recognition* (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 4:1-6).
 - 4) For the faithful it will be a time of *rejoicing* as we glorify the Lord by giving our rewards back to Him in worship and in praise.

THE DEVOTED NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (5:11-17)

A two-fold motivation for preaching the gospel of Christ (1) The fear of the Lord, (2) The love of Christ.

A. Motivated by the Fear of the Lord (vs. 11-13).

1. Knowing the terror of the Lord, he persuades men (v. 11a).
2. He is aware both God and they know him well (v. 11b).
3. His desire is to so live in service to God and them (no matter what some may think of him) that they may find reason to glory in him (vs. 12-13).
4. How can the Christian prepare for the Judgment Seat of Christ?
 - a. Maintain a clear conscience (v. 11).
 - b. Do not depend on the praise of men (v. 12).
 - c. Ignore the criticisms of men (v. 13).

B. Motivated by the Love of Christ (vs. 14-17)

1. Constrained by the love of Christ who died for all, he now lives for Him (vs. 14-15).
 - a. Christ's death for man showed His love.
 - b. Man living for Christ shows his love.
 - c. This gives man a new and different view of man.
 - d. Each man in Christ is a new creature.

NOTE: There needs to come to each of us a new sense of conviction and a new force of compulsion. Love needs to overmaster us. The world's need must overwhelm and appall us. We must be driven or we shall be dried up in the selfishness of our own souls.

2. He ceases to make superficial judgments based upon appearance, even as he had once done with Christ (v. 16).
3. For one in Christ is a new creation, and all things have become new (v. 17).

NOTE: The old standards of judgment and the old distinctions are gone; the old liabilities and the old inclinations are gone. From now on we measure a man by a new standard, not by the flesh, but by the Spirit; not by social birth, but by the new birth; not by his advantages, but by his activities; not by himself, but by Christ. In Christ we judge a man, not by what he has, but by what he does; not by what he was, but by what he is.

THE RECONCILING NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (5:18-21)

A. Paul Has Been Given a Ministry of Reconciliation (vs. 18-19)

1. He himself has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (v. 18a).
2. God has given him the ministry of reconciliation (vs. 18b-19).
 - a. The reconciliation of the world is actually God's work in Christ (v. 19a).
 - b. The word of reconciliation has been committed to Paul (v. 19b).
3. The origin of this ministry - It is from God (vs. 18-19).

- a. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.
- b. God was not reckoning their trespasses against them.
- c. God was offering the way of reconciliation.

B. Paul Pleads with Them to Be Reconciled to God (vs. 20-21).

- 1. Ambassadors of reconciliation. As ambassadors of Christ, pleading for God and on Christ's behalf (v. 20).
- 2. The basis of reconciliation. *For Christ became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him* (v. 21).

DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

- 1. *Terror of the Lord* means being conscious of fearing the Lord. It involved Paul's awareness of his accountability to God.
- 2. *We are beside ourselves* - a charge of madness appears to have been made by the false teachers at Corinth (cf Acts 26:24).
- 3. *Constraineth* - the idea is not *urging or driving*, but shutting up to one line and purpose, as in a narrow, walled road.
- 4. *After the flesh* - Paul refers to his knowledge of Christ before his conversion, a hear-say knowledge. He looked at Christ only from a worldly point of view.
- 5. *Was...reconciling*- God was engaged in reconciling the world from the very beginning, and that in Christ.
- 6. *Made to be sin* - not a sin-offering, nor a sinner, but the representative of sin. On Him, representatively, fell the collective consequence of sin.
- 7. *Who knew no sin* - this alludes to Christ's own consciousness of sinlessness, not to God's estimate of Him (cf John 8:46).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE

1. What are the three (3) main points of this lesson concerning Paul's ministry?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

2. What two (2) descriptions does Paul give of our present state and future state in verses 1-5?

1) _____
2) _____

3. What two (2) attributes does God's promise and guarantee of a better dwelling produce in Paul?

1) _____
2) _____

4. What are four (4) things which will occur at the judgment seat of Christ?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

5. What two (2) things motivated Paul to carry out his ministry in verses 11-17?

1) _____
2) _____

6. What has God given us as a guarantee of what is to come?

7. What was the great undergirding truth which convinced Paul that Christ/God loves us?

LESSON SIX

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION

Paul depicts the work of God in Christ as one in which God is reconciling the world to Himself. Paul's own role is that of an ambassador for Christ, who has been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation so he might implore people on God's behalf that they be reconciled to God (5:18-21).

At the close of chapter five, Paul described himself as an ambassador for Christ who pleads on God's behalf for people to be reconciled to God. With that thought in mind, he makes a special plea for the Corinthians not to receive God's grace in vain, reminding them that now is the time for salvation (6:1-2).

In the ninth and final description of his apostolic ministry, Paul focuses on the approved nature of his ministry. Determined not to give offense nor reason for blame, Paul has acted commendably. This is seen in the physical sufferings he has endured and the spiritual graces he has displayed. Even the conflicting reactions and reports by others, along with the various experiences described in a contrasting manner, help to confirm that his ministry is approved (6:3-10).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 5:17 - 6:10

LESSON AIM: To review the last five verses of chapter 5 and examine the first 10 verses of chapter six as they relate to Paul's ministry.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Study again the reconciling ministry of Paul and how it relates to our being reconcilers and ambassadors for God.
 2. Examine the new life and all its attributes.
 3. Learn that Paul's ministry is approved by God.
 4. Study nine testings, nine characteristics and nine paradoxes of the Christian worker.
-

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

A. The New View of Life (5:16-17)

1. A new and different view (v. 16).
 - a. A new way of measuring men.
 - b. Old judgments and measurements no longer valid.
2. A new and different creature (creation) (v. 17). Perfect tense here. The new has come completely in the past at the point of the new birth, at the point of coming into Christ with a continuing effect or action.
 - a. A new creation as against the old creation.
 - b. Adam was the fountainhead of life of the old creation.
 - c. Christ is the fountainhead of life for the new creation.

B. A New Purpose in Life (vs. 18-21)

1. **A new ministry** (v. 18). He reconciled us to reconcile others.
 - a. The basis of God being able to redeem us is through the atoning sacrifice of His Son.
 - b. Necessary response: acceptance of that sacrifice by an obedient faith.
 - 1) Sin is the problem since God is holy and righteous.
 - 2) There had to be an adequate and perfect sacrifice made for sin.
 - 3) Man is a rebel, a sinner, and God's enemy (Colossians 1:21).
 - c. The redemptive work of Christ is the means by which reconciliation is accomplished.
2. **A new message** (v. 19).
 - a. A message of reconciliation.
 - b. A message of freedom from sin. ...not counting men's sins against them.
 - 1) Not putting them down in His ledger book.
 - 2) God did not keep on entering man's sin in His ledger (a present participle).

NOTE: God not only cancels the record of evil, He also commences a new record of good. He puts to our credit by imputation the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

3. **A new title** (v. 20) - Ambassadors for Christ.
 - a. Ambassador - a legal term referring to an official that is sent directly out by the Sovereign Lord.
 - b. Every Christian through the revelation of the apostles is an ambassador with the message of reconciliation.
4. **A new condition** (v. 21). The righteousness of God in Christ.
 - a. Christ was without sin and chose to participate in our sinful condition.
 - b. By His perfect obedience many believers are made righteous.

THE APPROVED NATURE OF PAUL'S MINISTRY (6:1-10)

A. An Entreaty Not to Receive God's Grace in Vain (vs. 1-2)

1. Made by those who are God's co-workers (v. 1).
2. God's grace could be received in vain - to no profit. Whoever is not concerned with his work as ambassador, is receiving the grace of God in vain.
2. For the day of salvation spoken of in Isaiah 49:8 has arrived (v. 2).

B. Paul's Ministry an Approved One (vs. 3-10). Paul's blameless ministry.

1. Giving no offense, he seeks to commend himself as a minister of God in all things (vs. 3-4a).
 - a. He gave no occasion of stumbling because of him.
 - b. He commended himself as a minister of God.
2. Physical sufferings endured as a minister (vs. 4a-5). **Nine testings of the worker:**
 - a. *In Afflictions.*
 - b. *In Necessities* - needs unsupplied.
 - c. *In Distresses* - compressing experiences that put us into straits.
 - d. *In Stripes* - man-made testings.
 - e. *In Imprisonments* - these follow stripes.
 - f. *In Tumults* - mob violence and oppression from religious leaders.
 - g. *In Labors* - toil in supporting himself and others.
 - h. *In Watchings* - nights of sleeplessness.
 - i. *In Fastings* - self-denial and sacrifice.
3. Spiritual graces demonstrated as a minister (vs. 6-7). **Nine characteristics of the worker:**
 - a. *By Purity* - personal purity of character and conduct.
 - b. *By Knowledge* - spiritual insight.
 - c. *By Long-suffering* - forbearance that endures.
 - d. *By Kindness* - kindness melts the ice of indifference and breaks the flinty heart.
 - e. *By the Holy Spirit* - the Holy Spirit will produce a holiness of great attraction.
 - f. *By Love Unfeigned* - an unaffected love which endures and lasts and wears extremely well.
 - g. *By the Word of Truth* - the word of the Scriptures, the weapon of offense and the armor of defense.
 - h. *By the Power of God* - God's power in us, in heart, life, home and business.
 - i. *By the Armor of Righteousness.*
4. Conflicting reactions and reports by others toward him as a minister (v. 8).

5. Contrasting experiences as a minister (vs. 9-10). **Nine paradoxes of the worker:**
 - a. *By honor and dishonor.* Some will approve your work and others will disapprove.
 - b. *By evil report and good report.* We must learn to balance these reports so as not to be dependent on the one nor despondent over the other.
 - c. *As deceivers and yet true.* Here is the paradox of being branded as a deceiver but vindicated as true.
 - d. *As unknown and yet well known.* What does it matter if men forget so long as God remembers?
 - e. *As dying and behold we live.* Facing death's constant and imminent danger there is the deliverance of God's daily providence.
 - f. *As chastened and not killed.* This is not a sheltered life, free from the blasts of adversity.
 - g. *As sorrowful and yet always rejoicing.* Who dares to rejoice in sorrow? A fanatic? A lunatic? This is putting faith into the blackout of sight.
 - h. *As poor, yet making many rich.* There are more kinds of wealth than the credit of money.
 - i. *As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.* There are many who own many things and yet possess nothing. Rather they are possessed by what they have.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX

1. Concerning the new view of life what two (2) areas is newness concerned with?

1) _____
2) _____

2. As to the new purpose in life in vs. 18-21, list four (4) new things discussed.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. Name one way (as given in the study guide) that God's grace may be received in vain.

4. List nine (9) things Paul gives as testing his ministry.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

5. List nine (9) spiritual graces demonstrated by Paul which characterized his ministry.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

- 6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

6. List nine (9) paradoxes concerning Paul's ministry.

- 1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

LESSON SEVEN

AN APPEAL FOR ACCEPTANCE, HOLINESS AND RECONCILIATION

INTRODUCTION

At this point, Paul makes an appeal to the Corinthians. With a heart that is wide open to them, he begs for them to open wide their hearts to him as well. Then he pleads with them not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, in order that they might receive the promises of everlasting fellowship with God as their Father (6:11-18).

Chapter seven begins with Paul summarizing his pleas to the Corinthians made in the previous chapter. Again he calls for spiritual purity, and for hearts wide open (7:1-3).

Paul returns now to a point where he left off in chapter two, his anxiety when searching for Titus (cf. 2:12-13). After arriving in Macedonia, he finds him and the report Titus has from the church in Corinth is a source of great comfort and joy to Paul. Indeed, even the manner in which Titus was received by the Corinthians filled Paul with joy (7:4-7).

The Corinthians had received a previous letter from Paul with much sorrow, but with a godly sorrow that led to true repentance. Paul could see that, and he wanted them to know it was only out of care for them he had written it (7:8-12). Thus, the way they had received Titus and Paul's letter, rendering quick obedience, gave Paul confidence in the Corinthians (7:13-16).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 6:11 - 7:16

LESSON AIM: To see Paul's exhortation to leave idolatrous practices and be reconciled to him.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See the reality of the believer's affection for other believers as illustrated in Paul and the Corinthians.
 2. Learn six things spoken by Paul as to how a believer is to be separate from the world.
 3. Discover two conditions of heart by Paul and how each was brought about.
 4. Learn the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.
-

PREVIEW

LIFE'S ASSOCIATIONS AND CHASTENING (6:11-18)

A twofold association is referred to here. It is the believer in his relation to other believers and also in his relation to unbelievers.

- The Believer's Affection for Believers (vs.11-13)
- The Believer's Alliance with Unbelievers (vs. 14-18)
- The Cleansed Life (7:1)
- The Converted Life (7:2-4)
- The Chastened Life (7:5-12)

PAUL'S PLEA TO THE CORINTHIANS (6:11-18)

A. Open Wide Your Hearts (vs. 11-13)

1. Paul's own openness towards the Corinthians manifested (v. 11).
 - a. He has spoken freely (v. 11a). *His mouth is open...* perfect tense - it had been opened completely in the past with present results.
 - b. His own heart is wide open (v. 11b). Again perfect tense - Paul had extended himself fully in love long before the writing of this epistle and was still doing so.
2. The Corinthians likewise need to be open (vs. 12-13). The reason for their attitude: the condition of their hearts.
 - a. They are restricted by their own affections (v. 12).
 - b. As a father pleads with his children, Paul appeals to them to reciprocate by being open to him (v. 13).

B. Be Separate from the World (vs. 14-18)

1. *There can be no equality between believers and unbelievers* (vs. 14-16a). Literally: Stop becoming unequally yoked together with unbelievers.
 - a. Paul is not talking about social association or fellowship with unbelievers. See 1 Corinthians 5:10.
 - b. Paul is speaking of the union or communion and fellowship with the unbelieving pagan in the eating of that meat to his god.
 - c. What Paul means in these verses is the yoking of a saint with a sinner in religious or spiritual fellowship so that the disciple is working toward the same goal or purpose as the unbeliever.
2. *Righteousness has no fellowship with lawlessness* (v. 14b).
3. *Light has no communion with darkness* (v. 14c). Darkness cannot exist where light is. This is an impossibility.
4. *Christ has no accord with Belial* (v. 15a). This is the English word symphony and means to follow together the same score or tune.
5. *A believer has no part with an unbeliever* (v. 15b).
6. *The temple of God has no agreement with idols* (v. 16a).

- a. The temple of God is the church (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).
- b. Paul is discussing the sin of the church having fellowship with demons.
- c. Not discussing the marriage relationship (1 Corinthians 7:12-16).
 - 1) A believer married to an unbeliever must not depart from nor divorce them because they are unbelievers.
 - 2) Paul is discussing the disciple and his relationship to idolatry.

C. Implications of the Promise Given to the Temple of God (vs. 16b-7:3)

- 1. As the temple of God, God has promised to dwell and walk among us (v. 16b).
- 2. Therefore, we must be separate if we wish to be the children of God (vs. 17-18).
 - a. A negative goodness is not enough.
 - b. Must be a positive and an aggressive one. The Christian cannot keep his body pure and sin with his mind. See Matthew 5:21-48.
- 3. A plea for holiness (7:1).
 - a. In view of the promises given (v. 1a).
 - b. By cleansing ourselves from all filthiness (v. 1b).
 - c. By perfecting holiness in the fear of God (v. 1c).
 - This is a summary of the plea found in 6:14-18.
- 4. A plea for them to open their hearts (7:2-3).
 - a. To open their hearts for Paul and his companions (v. 2a).
 - b. For they have done no wrong to anyone (v. 2b).
 - c. Not said to condemn, but out of love (v. 3).
 - This is a repetition of the plea found in 6:11-13.

D. Paul's Comfort and Joy (7:4-16)

- 1. *Comforted by the coming of Titus* (vs. 4-6).
 - a. Paul's boldness made possible by his comfort and joy (v. 4).
 - b. Arriving in Macedonia, Paul was troubled (v. 5).
 - c. But God comforted him by the arrival of Titus (v. 6; cf. 2:12-13).
- 2. *Comforted by hearing of their repentance* (7:7-12).
 - a. Titus bore good news of their repentance (v. 7). We learn that there can be no repentance without a whole lot of pain!
 - b. Their repentance made him glad he had written the earlier epistle (v. 8).
 - 1) Genuine love causes pain when it is necessary.
 - 2) It is deceptive to think that we love people so much that we cannot tell them the truth.
 - c. He was glad their sorrow was that godly sorrow which leads to true repentance (vs. 9-10).

- 1) The word repent calls for a renovation of the mind, a complete change and mental outlook and of life and design.
- 2) Has to do with the source of our motives, not just conduct.
- 3) To allow Christ, through His word, to take over our thinking.
- d. The evidence of their godly sorrow (v. 11).
 - 1) Eager to clear yourselves.
 - 2) Desire to see justice done.
- e. Even so, he initially wrote out of a desire to express his care for them (v. 12).
3. *Titus is comforted by their obedience* (vs. 13-16). (The lecture on these verses will be on the TAPE/DVD at the beginning of Lesson 8)
 - a. The relief and joy of Paul as seen in verses 13 and 14. Our teaching the word of God will remind us that we must become Christian in our ideals and desires and aspirations before we can become Christian in practice.
 - b. Titus was moved with deep innermost affections by this experience (v. 15).
 - a. Titus remembered the obedience, that is the hearing and obeying of the Corinthians.
 - b. Another thing that impressed Titus about the Corinthians was the fear and trembling with which they received him.
 - c. Titus saw godly sorrow, obedience, fear and trembling. We have here the imperative part that the fear of God plays and the perfection of holiness out of reverence for God.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

1. *Godly sorrow* - Sorrow for sin as an offence against God (Psalm 51:6) and not for the temporal consequences.
2. *Sorrow of the world* - Such sorrow as the world feels - for failure, not for sin - works death as opposed to life.
3. *What a defense* - Of yourselves to me (Paul) through the mediation of Titus.
4. *What avenging* - The heavy punishment solemnly inflicted on the offender in God's name. (cf. 2:6; This word translated *avenging* always is used of God's avenging of sin, not of man's retaliation.)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN

1. In Paul's plea to the Corinthians he asked them to do what two (2) things?
1) _____
2) _____
2. In describing his own openness towards the Christians at Corinth Paul claimed what two (2) things?
1) _____
2) _____
3. Paul gave six (6) arguments for the Christian to be separate from the world. List these below.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
4. What two (2) reasons does Paul give for his distressed and troubled condition turning to comfort and joy?
1) _____
2) _____
5. Discuss the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.

LESSON EIGHT

THE GRACE OF GIVING (I)

INTRODUCTION

Ignorant men have complained that the Bible leaves people up in the clouds of practical religious piety and that Christianity is an empty hymn-singing display of religious theory. In the face of this it is interesting to notice how the Bible addresses itself to practical things and how it makes Christianity a thing of the hands and the feet as well as of the heart, the head and the lips.

One of the major ministries of Paul's third missionary journey was the taking up of a special relief offering for the poor Christians in Judea. Once before Paul had assisted in this way (Acts 11:27-30), and he was happy to do it again. It is significant that it was Paul who remembered the forgotten beatitude of our Lord: It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

But Paul had other blessings in mind besides the material assisting of the poor. He wanted this offering to strengthen the unity of the church as the Gentile churches shared with the Jewish congregations across the sea. Paul saw the Gentiles as debtors to the Jews (Romans 15:25-28), and the special collection was one way to pay that debt.

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 8:1-24

LESSON AIM: To see how Paul motivated others in their giving, to ascertain what principles ought to govern our giving and to appreciate the honorable manner in which Paul handled the collection for needy saints

LESSON PREVIEW: You will. . .

1. Learn six characteristics of the kind of giving described as grace giving discussed in 1 Corinthians chapter nine.
 2. Discover five attitudes manifested by the Macedonian churches concerning graceful giving.
 3. Discover that one's circumstances in life, as illustrated by the Macedonian churches, must not dictate whether we are graceful givers or not.
 4. Learn five qualifications for people handling the finances of God
-

It is a wonderful thing when Christians enter into the grace of giving, when they really believe that giving is more blessed than receiving. How can we tell when we are practicing grace giving? Paul indicated that there were a number of evidences that appear when our giving is motivated by grace.

GIVING AS A GRACE OF LIFE (8:1-8)

The liberality of the Macedonian Churches served as an example to the Christians at Corinth. Six characteristics of grace-giving:

A. Grace Giving is Giving In Spite of our Circumstances (vs. 1-5)

1. In spite of severe trials, afflictions and persecutions (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16).
 - a. God's grace enabled them to overflow or abound in rich generosity.
 - b. Liberality or generosity means unconditionally, sincerely, honestly, single-mindedly.
2. In spite of extreme poverty.
 - a. The Macedonians were bankrupt, destitute and impoverished financially.
 - b. The pressure and deep poverty overflowed in their liberality along with joy.

B. Grace Giving is to Give Enthusiastically (vs. 3-4)

1. Their giving was voluntary and spontaneous. It was of grace, not pressure of man.
 - a. It was according to and even beyond their ability.
 - b. It was of their own accord - they chose to do it.
 - c. It was with great urgency they begged for the privilege.
 - d. It was beyond anything Paul had hoped for.
 - e. It was the result of having first given themselves to God and to Paul by God's will. They sold out to the Lord!
2. The Macedonian churches were a powerful example for the church in Corinth.

C. Grace Giving is When We Give as Jesus Gave (vs. 6-9)

1. Grace giving completes our purpose (v. 6).
2. Grace giving cultivates the character or disposition of grace in the giver.
4. Paul wanted a like grace to be completed in the Corinthians (v. 6).
5. Giving in relation to other gracious privileges in which they abounded (v. 7).
 - a. They abounded in: faith, utterance, knowledge, earnestness and love.
 - b. The exhortation: abound in this grace also.
6. Love as the motivating force in giving (v. 8).
7. Christ's example is a motivating force for giving (v. 9).

D. Grace Giving Honors our Pledge or Purpose (vs. 10-11)

1. It is to their advantage to complete what they started a year before (v. 10).
 - a. Corinth had boasted earlier of their willingness to give.
 - b. Now they were to complete, finish the work.
2. So that there is not only a desire to do it, but the completion of it as well (v. 11).

E. Grace Giving Includes Faith and Ability (vs. 12-15)

1. Give willingly and according to ability (v. 12).
 - a. Willingness makes the gift acceptable, not the amount (v. 12).
 - b. Then it should be according to what one has (v. 12b).
2. Equality that balances want and abundance (vs. 13-15).

F. Grace Giving Involves Carefulness in Administration of Funds (vs. 16-24)

1. The mission of Titus and his associates (vs. 16-24).
 - a. Paul thanks God for Titus' concern for them (vs. 16-17).
 - 1) Titus had the same earnest care for them that Paul had.
 - 2) Titus had accepted the task because of this care for them.
 - b. Paul's commendation of Titus and others.
 - 1) The first brother (vs. 18-21).
 - a) He had the praise of all the churches (v. 18).
 - b) He had been appointed by the churches to this work.
 - c) Paul was thus avoiding any criticism of his handling of the funds (vs. 20-21).
 - 2) The other brother - a proven brother who had great confidence in the Corinthians (v. 22).
 - c. Paul's commendation of Titus and the others (v. 23).
 2. His plea for them to give a demonstration of the love and justification of his boasting about them (v. 24).

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. Chapters eight and nine contain the second main topic of the Epistle. The collection to be made for the poor saints in Judea. We hear of this first in 1 Corinthians 16:1 but it is plain from that passage as well as from 2 Corinthians 8:10; 9:2, that it had been organized some time before 1 Corinthians was written.
2. The whole of Greece, except the Roman colonies of Patrae and Corinth was in a dire condition of poverty and distress at this period.
3. It is noteworthy that no warnings against the temptations of wealth occur in 1 and 2 Thessalonians or Philippians.
4. *Diakonoia* is the regular Greek word for such charitable service (cf. Acts 6:1; 11:29; Romans 15:25, 31), a primary duty of the diakonoi (deacon) being the administration of alms.

5. *They gave themselves to the Lord* would probably refer to the devotion of personal service in the work of spreading the gospel. (See the list of men from Macedonia who gave themselves to travel with Paul).
6. In verse 8 Paul wants their liberal gift to be motivated out of love and not from a commandment.

NOTE: The men and women in every Christian ministry should possess the following qualifications if they are to handle God's money.

1. *A God-given desire to serve* (vs. 16-17)
Titus wasn't drafted, he had a desire in his heart to assist in the gathering of the special offering.
2. *A burden for lost souls* (v. 18). We do not know who this brother was, but we thank God he had a testimony that he shared the Gospel. We need people on our finance committees who have a burden for lost souls.
3. *A desire to honor God* (v. 19). Too often, financial reports glorify the church, or a group of special donors, and do not glorify God. We glorify God by using what He gives us the way He wants it used. If the people who manage church finances are not burdened to glorify God, they will soon be using those funds in ways that dishonor God.
4. *A reputation for honesty* (vs. 20-22). Paul made it clear that he welcomed the representatives from the cooperating churches. He wanted to avoid any blame.
5. *A cooperative spirit* (vs. 23-24). Titus not only had a heart for this ministry, but he knew how to be a good team member. Paul called him his partner and fellow helper.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT

1. In the introduction, what was one of the major ministries of Paul's third missionary journey?

2. What other purpose did Paul have in mind for this offering other than helping the poor saints in Jerusalem?

3. What did Paul use to motivate the Corinthian Christians to fulfill their promise to provide monetary help to the poor saints in Jerusalem?

4. List the six (6) characteristics of graceful giving.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

5. List five (5) attitudes which characterize the giving of the Macedonian churches.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6. Give five (5) qualifications for anyone who is involved in the financial work of the church.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

7. What is the regular Greek word for charitable service such as this?

8. What is the possible meaning of the phrase *they gave themselves to the Lord*?

LESSON NINE

THE GRACE OF GIVING (II)

INTRODUCTION

As he continues his discussion about the collection for the needy saints in chapter nine, Paul confesses that his writing may be superfluous. That is because he knows their willingness of which he boasted to the Macedonians, who in turn were stirred up by the zeal of the Corinthians. Yet Paul felt it necessary to send the messengers to ensure that the Corinthians had their gift ready, and that it was one of true generosity and not out of a grudging obligation. To find them unprepared would be embarrassing to both Paul and the Corinthians (9:1-5).

That they might give liberally, Paul reminds them of the principle of sowing and reaping, and that God loves a cheerful giver. He also writes of God's ability to give them an abundance for every good work, and prays that God will multiply the seed they have sown so they will be enriched in all things for even more liberality on their part (9:6-11).

He concludes this section by pointing out the effect this collection will have. It not only supplies the needs of the saints, it will abound in thanksgiving and praise to God, and produce prayers and longing in the hearts of the recipients for their benefactors. This prompts Paul to give thanks to God, for it is He who makes these things possible (9:12-15)!

It seems strange that we Christians need encouragements to give, when God has given so much to us. God had enriched the Corinthians in a wonderful way, and yet they were hesitant to share what they had with others.

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 9:1– 10:5

LESSON AIM: To see how Paul motivates the Corinthian Christians to complete their part in the collection for the poor saints in Judea.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. See how Paul had used the Corinthians' zeal to motivate the Macedonians in their giving (whose sacrificial giving had been used in chapter eight to motivate the Corinthians).
 2. Discover what kind of giving is pleasing to God.
 3. Learn the relation between sowing and reaping, and what is the proper use of what we have reaped.
 4. Observe what a collection like this was designed to produce.
-

THE PRACTICALITY OF GRACE GIVING (9:1-15)

Paul tried to motivate the Corinthians to get involved in the special offering; he did this by sharing four encouragements that relate to grace giving.

A. Your Giving Will Provoke Others (vs. 1-5)

1. The principle of readiness (vs. 1-5).
 - a. Paul knew of their readiness and zeal (vs. 1-2). It is biblical to praise one church to another as a motivating factor.
 - 1) Unnecessary to mention - you are willing (v. 1).
 - 2) He boasted of their readiness to the Macedonians to stir up their zeal (v. 2).
 - b. Further reasons for sending the brethren (vs. 3-5).
 - 1) Lest his boasting about them become an empty thing (v. 3).
 - 2) If you don't follow through, and the Macedonians learn of it, we (Paul and the Corinthians) will be ashamed (v. 4).
 - 3) So that the gift might be bounteous and not forced (v. 4).
2. Paul wants to uphold the reputation of our Lord and his own reputation.

B. Your Giving Will Bless You (vs. 6-11)

1. The principle of increase (v. 6) (cf Galatians 6:6-10).
 - a. The principle of increase: we reap in measure as we sow.
 - b. Sowing generously means in a way that is praising, benevolent and liberal.
 - c. Rewards promised in this verse are not just material rewards.
 - 1) The wealth of a Christ-like personality is being developed.
 - 2) A good report from others.
2. The principle of intent - free will (v. 7).
 - a. Each man had decided and purposed before.
 - 1) Scriptural giving begins with purpose.
 - 2) Scriptural giving must not be out of constraint or distress.
 - 3) God can bless a gift that is given out of a sense of duty, but God cannot add his blessings to the giver unless his heart is right.
 - b. Exhortation now to keep the pledge.
 - c. It is to be of a free, cheerful attitude.
 - 1) Not grudgingly - wishing didn't have to reluctantly.
 - 2) Not of necessity - by demand but willingly.
 - 3) God knows and loves a cheerful giver (Greek *hilaron* - hilarity or hilarious, Hebrew word - caused to shine).
3. The principle of immediacy: we reap even while we are sowing (vs. 8-10).
 - a. God makes the generous giver able to abound in every good work (v. 8). God's power is available unto us in the matter of giving.
 - b. The Scripture example (Psalms 112:9).
 - c. God supplies the seed - principle - the interest you receive in return

- is in proportion to your sowing (v. 10).
4. The principle of thanksgiving (vs. 11-15).
 - a. The results of generous giving (vs.11-14).
 - 1) Thanksgiving to God - from Paul and those helped.
 - 2) Praise to God because of their liberality.
 - 3) Longing for those who had shared with them.
 - b. Being provided for causes us to thank God!

C. Your Giving Will Meet Needs (v. 12)

1. Paul's emphasis is on the fact that their offering would meet the needs of poor saints in Judea.
2. Many people will give thanksgiving to God because of our sharing in the meeting of their needs.
3. Giving ought to provide for necessities not subsidize luxuries.

D. Your Giving Will Unite God's People (vs. 14-15)

1. The offering was an expression of love for brothers.
2. The offering would bring prayers on their behalf by their Jewish brethren.
3. Both the Jewish and the Gentile churches would be drawn closer to Jesus Christ (v. 15).

NOTE: In this section Paul has said that their generous giving will result in three things.

- a. First, it will enrich them - the giver.
- b. Second, it will supply the needs of God's people in Judea (v. 12).
- c. Third, it will produce thanksgiving to God both on the part of the Corinthians and the Judeans (vs. 11-12).

A CHALLENGE TO THE REBELS OF THE CHURCH (10:1-6)

A. He Pleads with Them in Meekness and Gentleness (vs. 1-2)

1. With great emphasis, he stresses that he himself is pleading with them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (v. 1a).
2. It appears that some misread Paul's humility in person as weakness, and that only in absence was he bold (v. 1b).
3. But he is hoping that it not be necessary for him to have the confident boldness he is prepared to use against those who misread Paul (v. 2).

B. The Nature of the Warfare, and Weapons Mighty in God (vs. 3-6)

1. While walking in the flesh, he does not war according to flesh (v. 3).
2. For the weapons he uses are not carnal, but they are mighty in God (v. 4a).
3. Such weapons are capable of:
 - a. Pulling down strongholds (v. 4b).

- b. Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God (v. 5a).
- c. Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (v. 5b).
- d. Being ready to punish all disobedience when their obedience is fulfilled (v. 6) .

NOTE: Many believers today do not realize that the church is involved in warfare, and those who do understand the seriousness of the Christian battle do not always know how to fight the battle. They try to use human methods to defeat demonic forces, and these methods are doomed to fail.

When Joshua and his army marched around Jericho for a week, the spectators thought they were mad. When the Jews trusted God and obeyed orders, they brought down the high walls and conquered the enemy (Joshua 6:1-20).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE

1. Paul points out four (4) results that will occur because of their willingness to give (9:1-15).
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
2. What three (3) reasons does Paul express in vs. 3-5 for sending the brothers on to Corinth?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
3. Name the four (4) principles of giving discussed in verses 6-15.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
4. What three (3) words describe generous giving?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
5. Complete the following statement:
God can _____ that is given out of a sense of duty,
but God cannot add his blessings to _____ unless his heart
is right.
6. Paul has said in verses 1-15 that their generous giving will result in what
three (3) things?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
7. What accusation(s) do you see against Paul by the rebels in Corinth in 10:1-2?

LESSON TEN

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY AND PAUL'S HOLY JEALOUSY

INTRODUCTION

Having concluded his discussion on the collection for the saints, Paul now returns to his own defense, especially as it pertains to his conduct and authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He pleads with them in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, hoping that by so doing it will not be necessary to use boldness in their presence against some who think Paul conducts himself according to the flesh (10:1-2). While he admits that he walks in the flesh, he does not war according to the flesh since he has weapons that are mighty in God and effective for winning arguments and bringing others to obey Christ (10:3-6).

He then responds directly in regards to his detractors. Some were evidently judging Paul on outward appearance, that while he sounded weighty and powerful in his writing, his physical presence was weak and contemptible. But Paul's authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ was real, and what he was in word when absent, he could be in deed when present (10:7-11).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 10:6 - 11:15

LESSON AIM: To see that Gospel preachers/teachers may be criticized as illustrated in the life and work of Paul at Corinth.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn how Paul responds to his detractors and of his godly jealousy for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthian brethren.
 2. See that Paul's apostleship is upheld and approved when compared with that of the false apostles.
 3. Contrast the ministry of Paul while at Corinth with that of the false teachers.
 4. Discover Paul's reasons for not accepting financial support from the churches in Corinth and Achaia.
-

We can also infer that some of Paul's detractors took pride in comparing themselves with others. Such a practice was unwise, and Paul was one who would boast only in those areas in which God had appointed him to serve. That would include the Corinthians themselves, for Paul would only go to areas where the gospel had not

been preached and that is how they had come to believe. Reminding them of this, Paul had hope that they would assist him in preaching the gospel in regions beyond them. He then admonishes them to boast only in the Lord, and to remember that not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends (10:12-18).

As Paul continues defending his apostolic authority, he finds it necessary to engage in a little folly. He does so out of concern for their faithfulness to Christ and his fear that others may have corrupted their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ (11:1-4). He also finds himself having to explain why he did not accept support from them. Evidently this was the basis for charges against him by those who considered themselves the most eminent apostles. But Paul, who had good reasons for not accepting their support, recognizes these detractors as they really were: false apostles and deceitful workers (11:5-15).

PAUL'S RESPONSE TO HIS DETRACTORS (10:7-18)

A. To Those Who Judge on Outward Appearance (vs. 7-11)

Paul defends his boasting about his authority.

1. He charged the Corinthians with taking a superficial view of the issues before them (vs. 7-8).
 - a. They failed to see that the basis of another's claim to belong to Christ was the same as Paul's (v. 7).
 - b. His authority was from the Lord and was to build up not to cast down.
2. He answers those who had criticized his letters (vs. 10-12).
 - a. They claimed his letters were weighty and strong, but his bodily presence was weak.
 - b. His action when present would match his words by letter.
 - c. He did not measure himself by men's standards.

B. To Those Who Boast of Their Accomplishments (vs. 12-18)

1. Paul defended the standard by which his boasting was to be judged (vs. 13-18). Paul considered it unwise to compare himself with those who measured themselves by others around them (v. 12). (See Luke 18:1ff - The Pharisee and the publican).
 - a. He boasted only in the limits God set for his work (v. 13).
 - b. He did not over extend himself (v. 14).
 - c. He had not boasted in other men's labors (vs. 15-16).
2. Paul's basic principle in boasting (vs. 17-18).
 - a. It was to God's glory.
 - b. He sought the approval of the Lord not men.
3. He had hope that the Corinthians would help him to preach the gospel where others had not gone (v. 15b -16a). Paul's goal was Spain, the outermost rim of the Roman empire.

4. In that way he would not boast in another's man accomplishments, but only in that which the Lord enabled him (vs. 16b-17).
5. In the end, only the one whom the Lord commands is approved (v. 18). Paul said that he is willing to have his life and ministry examined and approved by the Lord, not the man who recommends himself.

NOTE: The authority of a preacher is never that of the preacher but it is the authority of the word of God.

PAUL'S GODLY JEALOUSY FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF BRETHREN

A. His Concern for Their Faithfulness (11:1-4)

1. He resorts to a little folly, because with godly jealousy he seeks to present them as a chaste virgin to Christ (vs. 1-2)
2. Because of their seeming willingness to receive those who offer a different Jesus, spirit, and gospel, he fears that their minds may be corrupted (vs. 3-4)
3. His position in respect to their relationship to Christ.
 - a. Paul betrothed them to Christ.
 - b. He feared that they might be led away from this pure relationship to Christ.
4. The conditions under which they were ready to listen to other teachers (v. 4).
 - a. They would listen if some came preaching another Jesus.
 - b. They would listen if they received a different spirit.
 - c. They would even listen to a different gospel.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. *Paul's jealousy over the Corinthians* was on behalf of God (cf. Zechariah 1:14; Acts 22:3; Romans 10:2).
2. *I have espoused* - Literally; *have fitted together*. Used in the classics of carpenter's or joiner's work and fitting clothes or armor.
3. *Paul expresses his anxiety* lest the Corinthian church, the Bride of Christ, should be seduced by the devil from her singleness of affection and her purity, and so should be guilty of spiritual fortification. They were showing themselves too willing to listen to strange teachings.
4. *Another Jesus* (4) - a different representation of the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, from that which Paul put forward when at Corinth.
5. *A different Spirit* - a Spirit different from Him whom you received at your baptism.
6. *A different gospel* - than the gospel which was first brought to you by me (cf Galatians 1:6-8).

B. Paul's Apostleship Upheld (vs. 5-15)

He contrasted his ministry at Corinth with that of the false teachers (vs. 7-15).

1. Paul's humble attitude and love to and for the Corinthians (vs. 7-11).
 - a. He preached the gospel without charge.
 - b. He had been supported by other churches of Macedonia.
 - c. His support had come from the churches of Macedonia.
 - d. The basis of his boasting in Achaia was that he did not burden the Corinthian Church with his support.
 - e. He calls God to testify of his love for them.
2. His reason for continuing this policy in Achaia (vs. 12-15).
 - a. To prevent others from making the claim that they were on the same footing as Paul in relation to the Corinthians (v. 12).
 - b. It was to show the real motives of others (v. 13).
 - 1) They were false apostles.
 - 2) Deceitful workers.
 - 3) False apostles of Christ.
 - c. He revealed their relation to Satan (vs. 14-15).
 - 1) Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
 - 2) His servants disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.
 - d. He revealed what their end will be.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. Two reasons were assigned for the disparagement of his apostolic authority, 1) he had none of the arts of a trained rhetorician, 2) he had not claimed maintenance from the church at Corinth, which he had a right to do, if of genuine *apostolic* rank.
2. The super-apostles - Lit, *those who are preeminently apostles*. Farrar renders *the extra-apostles*. These are the men of verse 13.
3. Light is the symbol of God and His messengers, as darkness is the symbol of Satan and his workers.

CONSIDER

How do you measure a minister and his ministry?

1. False measurement (10:12).
 - a. Measuring according to man's standard.
 - b. Failing to measure ourselves by Jesus Christ.
2. True measurement (10:13-18). Ask these questions:
 - a. *Am I where God wants me to be?*
 - 1) God assigned a field in which Paul was to work.
 - 2) Corinth was a God-assigned work for Paul.
 - b. *Is God glorified by my ministry?* (10:15-17).
 - 1) Be careful not to steal glory that belongs to God.
 - 2) Be careful not to hinder the ministry of another.

- 3) The final test comes at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and then shall every man have praise of God (1 Corinthians 4:5).
- c. *Can the Lord commend my work?* (10:18). We may commend ourselves or be commended by others, and still not deserve the commendation of God. How does God approve our work? By testing it. God permits difficulties to come to local churches in order that the work might be tested and approved.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN

1. Paul charged the Corinthians with looking at things in what kind of way?

2. What were the false teachers' claims concerning Paul's letters and his speech?

3. How did Paul defend his boasting? (Three (3) things he said about his boasting.)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. Explain the three (3) statements: *another Jesus, a different spirit, a different gospel.*

5. Who are the super-apostles in 11:5? _____

6. How does Paul describe the false teachers at Corinth in verses 13-15?

7. What two (2) reasons were assigned for the disparagement of Paul's apostolic authority?

1) _____

2) _____

LESSON ELEVEN

PAUL'S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY AND VISIONS AND THORNS

INTRODUCTION

While not desiring to act foolishly, he finds it necessary since it seems that the Corinthians are so willing to accept those who do (11:16-21). With some foolish boldness, then, Paul claims equal footing with his detractors as it pertains to physical heritage. But when it comes to service as a minister of Christ, he far surpasses them as is evident in the things he suffered. After listing many examples of suffering, he concludes that if he must boast it will be in the things which concern his infirmity, giving his escape from Damascus as an illustration (11:22-33).

Coming to the issue of visions and revelations of the Lord, he describes a man in Christ who fourteen years before had been caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words unlawful to utter. Paul would boast of such a one, but in direct reference to himself he would only boast in his infirmities, lest people think too highly of him (12:1-6).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 11:16 – 12:10

LESSON AIM: To see the cause and need of Paul's boasting about his life and ministry.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Learn how Paul's life and ministry compares with that of the pseudo-apostles in Corinth.
 2. See that Paul's special revelation and vision showed him to be approved by God.
 3. Learn that God allows Satan to harass His ministers through difficult circumstances and hardships.
 4. Discover that the third heaven or Paradise is the invisible realm of existence where God's throne is.
-

Lest he be exalted above measure because of the abundance of revelations he had received, a thorn in the flesh (also described as a messenger of Satan) was given to buffet him (that is, to keep him humble). When he asked the Lord on three separate occasions to remove it, the Lord's reply was that His grace was sufficient and His strength was made complete in times of weakness. This prompted Paul to take

pleasure in his infirmities endured for Christ's sake (which I believe to have been the thorn in the flesh). For when he was weak, the power of Christ in him made him strong (12:7-10).

PAUL'S APOSTOLIC LABORS AND TRIALS (11:16-33 - 12:1-10)

Paul compares his life and hardships as an apostle with that of the pseudo-apostles.

A. The Apostle Paul's Boasting (11:16-33)

Paul was committed to a full exposure of these lying apostles and to do everything to stop their influence and teaching.

1. Paul asks them to allow him to boast a little (vs. 16-21).
 - a. He asked to be received even in his boasting (v. 16).
 - b. This approach was not the way the Lord appealed to his hearers.
 - c. He had confidence in his grounds for boasting.
 - d. He described the type of man they were willing to put up with (v. 20).
 - 1) One who enslaved them.
 - 2) One who devoured them.
 - 3) One who took advantage of them.
 - 4) One who exalted himself.
 - 5) One who struck them in the face.
 - e. Judged by such standards Paul admitted he was weak (v. 21a).
2. He compared his grounds for boasting - his labor and sufferings - with that of others (vs. 21-29).
 - a. *In relation to the Fathers*, he was their equal (vs. 21-22).
 - 1) Are they Hebrews? So was he.
 - 2) Are they Israelites? So was he.
 - 3) Are they Abraham's seed? So was he.
 - b. *In relation to Christ*, he excelled them (23).
 - 1) To call them ministers of Christ is to speak as a madman.
 - 2) He excelled them in all the proofs of a minister of Christ, labors, imprisonments, beatings and death for Christ.
 - c. *In relation to the things he suffered* as a minister of Christ, he was far beyond them (vs. 24-29).
 - 1) Beatings, stonings, shipwrecks (vs. 24-25).
 - 2) Journeys and perils (v. 26).
 - 3) Labor, travail, watching, hunger, thirst, fasting, cold and nakedness (v. 27).
 - 4) Anxiety for all the churches (v. 28).
 - 5) Identity with the weak and stumbling (v. 29).
 - d. He glories in his weakness and calls upon God as witness to his honesty and sincerity (vs. 30-33).

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. I say again - the first time was in verse one.
2. Paul meets the false apostles on their own ground - glorying in fleshly circumstances.

3. The false apostles enslaved them - Paul was a slave to them.
4. They take from you (devour you) - I gave to you.
5. They take you captive - I set you free.
6. They exalt themselves - I exalt you.
7. They smite you on the face (insult you) - I build you up and boast of you.

B. The Apostle Paul's Vision (12:1-10)

If he chose, he could boast of his special visions and revelations (2 Corinthians 12:1-10; See also Acts 9:3-6; Acts 19; Acts 26:12ff).

1. His experience of being caught up to the third heaven (vs. 1-4).
 - a. The time was fourteen years earlier.
 - b. He didn't know if he was in the body or just the spirit.
 - c. Location - Paradise(v. 4)/Third Heaven (v. 2).
 - d. He heard words not lawful for man to utter.
2. Boasting about this experience emphasized his own weakness (vs. 5-10).
 - a. On behalf of one who had such an exalted experience, he boasted; but as to himself he boasted in his weakness (v. 5).
 - b. This actually happened to Paul, so it was not foolish to speak of it, except that some might tend to overrate him because of it (v. 6).
 - c. To keep him from self-exaltation, Paul was given *a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet him* (v. 7).
 - 1) It is in the flesh, not Psychological.
 - 2) It was continual harassment. The word torment or buffet are in the present tense showing continuing action.
 - 3) It had been going on for fourteen years.
 - 4) It came as Satan's messenger.
 - d. He asked the Lord three times to remove it, but the answer was:
 - 1) *My grace is sufficient for thee* (vs. 8-9).
 - 2) *My strength is made perfect in weakness.*
 - e. Paul gladly, therefore, boasted in his weakness that the power of Christ might rest upon him or cover him (v. 9).
 - f. It was in his weakness that he was made strong by the power of Christ (v. 10).

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

1. Paul's glorying was forced upon him - that is, his opponents had driven him to it.
2. The date of this vision must have been about 41 or 42 A.D.
3. He is anxious that he should be judged, not by his report of his own spiritual experiences, but by his laborious and painful life in the service of the Gospel.

NOTE: The Third Heaven:

This was the Jews' way of discussing God's dwelling place. They believed the first heaven described the atmosphere around us, around the earth. The second heaven was out there where the stars and planets were, and the third heaven was the invisible realm where God's throne is. Heaven is the realm

of existence which is invisible to the human eye. It is as real as anything that is visible to the physical man.

SUMMARY

This section is the climax of Paul's defense of his apostleship and his love for the believers at Corinth. He was reticent to write about these personal experiences, but there was no other way to solve the problem. In fact, to avoid exalting himself, Paul described his experience in the third person rather than the first person. He shared with his readers three experiences from God.

1. *Glory: God Honored Him (12:1-6).* Visions and revelations.
2. *Goodness: God Humbled Him (12:7-8).* God in his goodness, permitted Satan to buffet Paul in order to keep him from becoming proud.
3. *Grace: God Helped Him (12:9-10).* Two messages were involved in this painful experience. The thorn in the flesh was Satan's message to Paul, but God had another message for him, a message of grace.

PRACTICAL LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

1. *The spiritual is far more important to the dedicated believer than the physical.*
2. *God knows how to balance burdens and blessings, suffering and glory.*
3. *Not all sickness is caused by sin.*
4. *There is something worse than sickness, and that is sin; and the worst sin of all is pride.*
5. *Physical affliction need not be a barrier to effective Christian service.*
6. *We can always rest in God's Word.*

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN

1. List the five (5) characteristics of the men with whom they were putting up.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

2. In what two (2) areas does Paul compare himself with the false apostles?
1) _____
2) _____

3. How did Paul compare with the false apostles in relation to the fathers? In relation to Christ? In relation to sufferings?
To the fathers _____
To Christ _____
To Sufferings _____

4. In 12:1-10 what did Paul use to show that his apostleship was approved by God?

5. Give four (4) statements describing the characteristics of Paul's thorn in the flesh.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

6. What was the purpose of Paul's thorn according to.
Satan: _____
God: _____

7. When Paul requested that the thorn be removed, what was the two-fold (2) answer of God?
1) _____
2) _____

LESSON TWELVE

PAUL'S LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul's foolish boasting concludes with a mild rebuke for their compelling him to do it, for it is they who should have commended him. Indeed, while with them he demonstrated the signs of an apostle (signs, wonders, mighty deeds) that clearly showed he was not in anyway behind the most eminent apostles. The only charge that could be brought against him? He had not accepted support from them like he had from other churches (12:11-13).

The remaining part of this chapter is filled with an expression of love and concern for them. He explains again why he will not accept support from them: Like parents for their children, Paul will gladly spend and be spent for their souls. Neither he nor those he sent to them had taken advantage of them in any way, and have sought to do all things for their edification (12:14-19). Finally, he expresses his fear that when he comes the conditions will not be what he and they wish. He is fearful that there will be all sorts of strife, and that many of those who have sinned will not have repented (12:20-21).

In this final chapter, Paul makes final comments in preparation for his coming. This being the third time he is coming, there has been ample opportunity for those in need of repentance to do so. Especially since they seek proof of Christ speaking in him, he will not spare them on this visit (13:1-4).

LESSON TEXT: 2 Corinthians 12:11– 13:14

LESSON AIM: To see Paul's continued expression of concern for the Christians at Corinth and his closing remarks.

LESSON PREVIEW: You will . . .

1. Appreciate that a time must come when discipline can no longer be spared.
 2. See the need for periodic self-examination in order to prove that Christ does indeed dwell in us.
 3. Notice what will ensure that the God of love and peace will be with us.
-

His desire, however, is for their faithfulness. He therefore encourages them to engage in self-examination to prove whether or not they are in the faith, and whether Christ is in them (vs. 5-6). His earnest prayer is that they do no evil, but that which is honorable, and to be made complete. It is in keeping with this that he has written this

epistle, and to avoid having to use sharpness when in their presence (13:7-10)

PAUL'S LOVE AND CONCERN FOR THEM (12:11-21)

A. The Signs of an Apostle (vs. 11-13)

1. He was compelled to engage in foolish boasting by those who ought to have commended him (v. 11a). Paul shamed the Corinthians for their *lack of commendation*.
 - a. For in nothing was he behind the most eminent apostles (v. 11b).
 - b. For among them he accomplished the signs of an apostle: signs, wonders, and mighty deeds (v. 12).
 - 1) Signs - indicate that the power from the Holy Spirit signified God's presence and power to confirm His Word.
 - 2) Wonders - indicate the effects that miracles had on the Corinthians.
 - 3) Miracles - prove that the events which transcend the laws of nature had occurred among them.
2. His only mistake? He had not been a financial burden to them! (v. 13). Paul used sharp irony and sarcasm to make his point.

B. His Love for Them (vs. 14-19)

1. Purpose in his coming for the third time, he will not be burdensome to them (vs. 14-16).
 - a. He does not seek what is theirs, but them (v. 14a).
 - b. Like parents providing for their children, he will gladly spend and be spent for their souls (vs. 14b-15a).
 - c. Even though it seems to jeopardize their love for him (v. 15b).
2. His sacrificial service. This was a vivid contrast with the action of the super apostles. (vs. 16-19a).
 - a. He asks them whether he has taken advantage of them by any of those he had sent to them (vs. 17-18).
 - b. He needs no excuse, for he does all things for their edification (v. 19).
 - c. He is willing to be spent - to be consumed, exhausted, to be used up, depleted of energy, power and earthly possessions for their spiritual good.
 - d. Some had inferred that Paul would possibly line his pockets with some of the money collected for the poor Jewish saints (2 Corinthians 8 and 9).

C. His Concern for Them (vs. 20-21)

1. His fear is that when he comes, they will not find one another the way they wish (v. 20a).
2. His fear is that there will be all sorts of strife (v. 20b).
3. His fear is that he will find many of them unrepentant of their sins (v. 21).

FINAL COMMENTS IN PREPARATION OF HIS COMING (13:1-10)

A. Warning of Impending Discipline (vs. 1-4)

1. This will be his third visit, which will serve to verify their true condition (v. 1).
2. With this visit, he will not spare to exercise his authority in Christ (v. 2). See Acts 13:4ff.
3. Since they seek proof of Christ speaking in him (vs. 3-4).

NOTE: From the context in verses 3 and 4 it seems that some of the false brethren and teachers at Corinth had deceived some to think that Christ had been crucified because he was too weak to prevent his death. But the literal historical actual resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead proved all his claims to divine power, proved all his claims to moral perfection, proved all his claims to supernatural revelation, and proved that he did not die in weakness.

B. Exhortation to Self-examination (vs. 5-6)

1. To prove whether or not they are in the faith (v. 5). Proving themselves to be Christians would prove that Paul was an apostle of Christ.
2. His trust is that they will know that he is not disqualified (v. 6).

C. His Desire for Their Faithfulness (vs. 7-9)

1. His prayer is that they do no evil, but that which is honorable (v. 7).
2. Not for his sake, for even if he should seem disqualified, he can do nothing against the truth (vs. 7-8).
3. He will gladly be weak if it means they are strong, for his prayer is that they may be complete (v. 9).

D. His Purpose in Writing this Epistle (v. 10)

1. So that when present he does not need to use sharpness.
2. Which is in keeping with the authority he has from the Lord for their edification.

CONCLUDING REMARKS (vs. 11-14)

A. Final Exhortations (v. 11)

1. Become complete.
2. Be of good comfort.
3. Be of one mind.
4. Live in peace.
-- For then the God of love and peace will be with them.

B. Greetings (vs. 12-13)

1. An admonition to greet one another with a holy kiss (v. 12).
2. Greetings sent to them from the saints (v. 13).

C. Benediction (v. 14)

1. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The love of God.
3. The communion of the Holy Spirit.
-- Be with them all. Amen.

SUMMERY

The church is a miracle, and it can be sustained only by the miracle ministry of God. No amount of human skill, talents, or programs can make the church what it ought to be. Only God can do that. If each believer is depending on the grace of God, walking in the love of God, and participating in the fellowship of the Spirit, not walking in the flesh, then he will be a part of the answer and not a part of the problem. He will be *living* this benediction--and being a benediction to others!

Ask God to make you that kind of Christian. Be encouraged--and then encourage others.

CONSIDER

1. The proof of Paul's apostleship - the signs of an apostle.
2. The only way they were inferior to other churches was he had not been a burden to them. Ironically, he added, *forgive me this wrong*.
3. Paul's honorable intention was their *good* not their *substance*.
4. His attitude of spirit was giving of himself not taking from them.
5. Titus and the others whom Paul sent had the same attitude.
6. The reason for Paul writing all these things was not to excuse himself but that those who needed to repent would do so.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE

1. According to 12:12, what was the ultimate or final proof of Paul's apostleship?

2. Define:

Signs - _____

Wonders - _____

Miracles - _____

3. What three (3) fears reflect Paul's concern for them upon his return?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4. In what way was the church at Corinth inferior to other churches?

5. What was Paul afraid he might find when he came to Corinth?

6. What is the three-fold (3) benediction to this book?

7. With what were they to greet each other?

8. With what four-fold (4) exhortation does Paul close the book of 2 Corinthians?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

~~Study Guide~~

C. W. "Abe" Lincoln

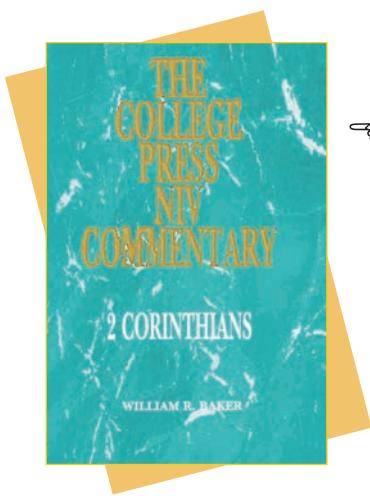
Abe was born and reared on a farm near Sweetwater, Texas. He graduated from Sweetwater High School and won for himself a scholarship to TCU and later transferred to ACC, now ACU, from which he received his B.S. Degree in 1950.



Brother Lincoln's first venture was as a high school principal and football coach. Sundays were always devoted to a greater contest than athletics, as he proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. His first love soon emerged as the victor and thus, he dedicated full time to the work of an evangelist.

Abe's over forty years on the firing line for the Lord took him to works in Iowa, Odessa, Midland, and Fort Worth, Texas and over twenty-five years teaching in the **Sunset International Bible Institute** in Lubbock. In the late fifties, the Lincoln family labored with the Tex Williams family in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, for three years. The Lincolns were working locally as both evangelist and elder with the church in Seminole, Texas along with his teaching duties in the **Sunset International Bible Institute** when he went to be with his Lord in the Spring of 1997.

While at ACU, Abe met and married Dot Dollar. They have a son, Steve, and a daughter, Becky.



The College Press NIV Commentary on "2 Corinthians" is a companion book to this study.

SUNSET
International Bible Institute
External Studies
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