



For the week of August 7



Monday, August 8 — 2 Corinthians 7

Chapter Summary: Paul continues to talk about his first letter to the Corinthians and the result of it. It caused the church and Paul great pain to go through conflict, but he rejoices that now they are all stronger. He tells them that godly sorrow leads to repentance and he is glad to see the church renewed. He tells them how glad he was when Titus came to him with the news of how things were going in Corinth.

Devotional: It's hard to say something when you'd rather say nothing. Confrontation is never easy, especially among friends. Some people seem to excel at confrontation, but not in a way we would like to emulate. Paul describes how it broke his heart to have to confront his friends at Corinth about their sin, but he did it. He now rejoices over their repentance. His desire has always been to restore the relationship to a full and joyful state as quickly as possible. How can we learn from Paul about when and how to confront a brother about sin and what does Paul teach us about reconciliation? Tell of a time you were able to renew a broken relationship and what you learned from it.

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Paul claims to have boasted in the Corinthian church. Generally boasting is bad and pride is to be avoided. What kind of godly pride would allow Paul to boast about the church?
- What is it about Paul's previous letter that would have caused the church and Paul so much grief? How was that issue resolved by the church and by the individual involved?



Tuesday, August 9 — 2 Corinthians 8

Chapter Summary: Paul tells the Corinthians about how the churches in Macedonia gave liberally even though they were in poverty. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they, too, have promised to give generously. He reminds them that Jesus is our example in our giving just as in anything else we do. Then he reminds of how badly the saints in Jerusalem and Judea are in need, which is the reason for the collection.

Devotional: What motivates you to give? Paul gives several ideas here. He reminds them of the deep and abiding need of the saints in Judea. He reminds them of Christ and his example of giving everything for us. He challenges them to keep up with the Christians in Macedonia. And he also reminds them that he is only asking them to honor the pledge they have already made. Paul seems to be saying that giving is so important for a Christian that he will use whatever motivation works to help the church give as she should. How can we be good givers and help others to be, too?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- What does this chapter teach about how much an individual Christian and a church as a whole should be giving to the work of the Lord?



Wednesday, August 10 — 2 Corinthians 9

Chapter Summary: Paul continues to talk about giving. He explains how he and others with him will administer the gift they give. He wants to be clear that there is some accountability in how he handles the money. He returns to the topic of their giving by explaining some of the spiritual principles behind why they should be generous, cheerful givers.

Devotional: “But what if I don’t *want* to give anything? If God loves of a cheerful giver and I’m not happy about giving, then I don’t have to give anything, right?” These are questions Sally asked her father when he was teaching her about giving at church. He was encouraging her to give a portion of her allowance. How would you answer Sally? What do you think Sally’s real goal is in this lesson? Can you look at your own life and see how giving to the Lord has been a blessing to you? Talk about some of the things you’ve learned from giving.

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Paul makes it clear that while money isn't the focus of what he's doing, it is often our focus! He also makes it clear that it is impossible to be a stingy, complaining giver and please God. What does that tell us about WHY we give and WHAT we give?

- Why is financial accountability important in church leadership? What steps can a church take to be financially transparent?

- Why do you think people want their giving to be confidential?



Thursday, August 11 — 2 Corinthians 10

Chapter Summary: Paul now addresses some who have criticized him. He reminds the church that we are in a spiritual war, not a physical one. The battle is often in our mind and we take captive every thought that is opposed to Christ. He has authority as an apostle and God has specifically given him authority in Corinth. He draws a sharp contrast between himself and his critics.

Devotional: Have you ever had a fight with a brother or sister? Who won? In a fight, our words can be as powerful as (or more powerful than!) punches or kicks. Why is that?

Paul says that Christians don't fight like the world fights. For one thing, we have a different enemy! As we fight against Satan, the war is often fought in the battlefield of our mind. How do our thoughts shape our words and actions? What happens if we can "bring every thought into captivity" like Paul says in v. 5?

What are some battle tactics we can use to help us think like Jesus on a daily basis?

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- What difference does it make when we realize who our real enemy is instead of thinking it is each other? How does this change the way we see fights that happen among brethren?

- Paul chastises his critics for criticizing him instead of working on the problems they needed to fix. He warns them they should be careful of thinking they are in a position to criticize him as an apostle. What role does pride play in our criticism? What is the proper way to handle issues where we feel critical of others?

- Paul says his God given authority extended to the church at Corinth. Who has God placed in authority over you?



Friday, August 12 — 2 Corinthians 11

Chapter Summary: Paul now attacks the false teachers in Corinth in an effort to help the church remain faithful. He reminds the church of his own ministry efforts among them. The false teachers teach another gospel and boast about the glorious rewards of faith. Paul contrasts that with his own experience of suffering and rejection. Even though he has not been blessed materially for his faith, Paul has chosen to remain faithful.

Devotional: A Boy Scout has his badges to show the work he has completed as a scout. In the workplace our resume often lists our accomplishments on the job. Paul boasts in all the difficulties he has experienced in his ministry. Why is that what he chooses to list on his resume? What would you put on your spiritual resume? Tell of a time the Lord brought you through some difficulty and how it strengthened your faith and glorified God.

Questions for more thought/discussion:

- Paul describes being faithful to the gospel as “the simplicity that is in Christ” (v.3). How is being a Christian simple? What is the difference between simple and easy?
- What do Paul’s words about financial support indicate about how a church should support a preacher? What does it indicate about other congregations supporting a minister who is doing mission work?
- Paul declares himself to be weak and prone to stumbling. As you have read 2 Corinthians, what are Paul’s weaknesses?

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