

Calvary Chapel of El Cajon Women's Bible Studies

2 Corinthians 1:1-14

Lesson 1

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... Thus begins what is commonly known as the second letter of Paul to the church at Corinth. The call of God to apostleship can be seen as one of high honor and glory – one of respect and admiration. Paul discovered otherwise. He experienced, from believers in Corinth, criticism, doubt, false accusations, and little respect for his calling as an apostle. In this lesson we will begin our journey in watching Paul's response and getting glimpses of his heart as is not expressed in any of his other writings. There will be much for us to glean.

DAY ONE: Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-14

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheets and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?

- a. This section of 2 Corinthians 1 has been divided into four paragraph divisions. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 1-2

Verses 3-7

Verses 8-11

Verses 12-14

How would you title each section? Record your titles on the **Chapter & Paragraph Division Titles Chart** provided with your Observation Worksheet.

2. At the right-hand side of the same chart are columns labeled **Key Word** and **Symbol**. They have been provided for you to record the key words and the symbol you have chosen to represent each one. Record the key words listed below and their symbols on the chart.

God, Jesus, comfort/consolation, and Paul/we

Now, using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words each time they are used in 2 Corinthians 1:1-14. Remember, as you mark the key words to mark any personal pronouns that refer to them (For example: *Father* and *who*). You do not need to mark every word that refers to them – only those that you feel are significant.

3. Scan the verses that contain the words that refer to *God* either as the *Father* or as *Jesus*. On the next page, make one list of what the text reveals about them. We have provided the first item for you. Include the reference verse(s) in parenthesis at the right of each item.

4. He has a will (1)

- a. Share something that impacted you as you made your list.

DAY TWO: Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-2

1. The author(s) of this letter is quickly identified in verse 1. Who wrote this letter?

Note: it is commonly believed that because of Paul's difficulty in writing, possibly because of severe eye problems, he dictated this letter to Timothy, who carefully penned the expressions of Paul's heart.

2. Paul claimed the respected title of *apostle*. By whose *will* did Paul claim this position?

- a. What position(s) do you have *by the will of God*?

1.) How does knowing your position is *God's will* affect the way you walk in it?

2.) How does knowing your place in life is *God's will* affect your acceptance of that place and prevent you from jealousy towards others who have what might seem to be a "better" place?

3. To whom was Paul writing this letter?

Challenge: Using 1 Corinthians, describe the conditions in the church of Corinth at the time of Paul's writing.

4. In verse 2, Paul wishes the recipients *grace* and *peace*. From Whom does *grace* and *peace* come from?

- a. From your own personal experience, describe the *grace* and *peace* you have received from God.

DAY THREE: Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

1. Paul begins this section, praising God. What does he say about Him in verse 4?
 - a. Define *comfort*.
2. According to verse 4, *in* what does He *comfort* us?
 - a. Underline, highlight or circle the word that defines how many *tribulations* God comforts us in: a few, some, several, lots, none, all. ☺
 - 1.) What is your response to that truth?
 - 2.) Describe the response encouraged in Isaiah 52:9.
3. One reason God *comforts* us is that *we might comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.* verse 4 Here we have an example of how to come alongside and *comfort* someone who is in trouble - we *comfort* them with the *comfort* we have experienced from God. Practically, what are we called to do?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 1:5 in other translations and record what you think Paul is saying in this verse.
 - a. How should knowing that the more you suffer, the more you will experience God's comfort, assure you and keep you from fearing hard times?
5. Verses 6 and 7 reveal Paul's heart of love and compassion for the people he serves. He endures suffering knowing that others will benefit from what He has learned. How do others learn from our responses in suffering (whether we intend for them to learn from us or not)?
6. These verses do not necessarily mean that we cannot comfort someone unless we have gone through what they are experiencing. We simply need to have experienced the work of the great *Comforter*. Share a time you were comforted by someone who *comforted* you with the *comfort* they had experienced from God.

Challenge: *I have heard many such things; Miserable comforters are you all!* (Job 16:2). Why were Job's comforters such *miserable comforters*?

DAY FOUR: Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

1. In 2 Corinthians 1:8 Paul uses strong words to describe the severity of his suffering in Asia. Record those words by filling in the blanks below:

...we were burdened _____ measure, _____ strength, so that we _____ even of life.

2. Paul's sufferings were bad enough that he thought he might die. In times like that, we are brought to the realization that we are helpless to help ourselves. Who did Paul place His trust in? verse 9

- a. Contrast the man who trusts the Lord and the one who does not using Psalm 1:1-3 and Jeremiah 17:7.

3. What ability of God did Paul refer to in verse 9?

- a. In what ways does knowing that God raised Jesus from the dead help you to place your trust in Him?

4. What does it mean to place your trust in the Lord?

- a. Explain, as you would to someone who was suffering, how to place trust in the Lord.

5. Although Paul's personal relationship with the Lord was strong, what does verse 11 say he was thankful for?

- a. Read the following verses and express how important the prayers of others was to Paul:

Romans 15:30 *Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me...*

Ephesians 6:18-19 *...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel...*

Colossians 4:3 *meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains...*

1 Thessalonians 5:25 *Brethren, pray for us.*

2 Thessalonians 3:1 *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you...*

Hebrews 13:8 *Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably.*

6. What have you learned from this section about the sufferings of fellow believers?

DAY FIVE: Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-14

1. Many accusations were made of Paul by people of the church of Corinth. In this section, Paul begins to defend himself: *For our boasting is this*: In other words, the reason Paul supports what he is doing, the reason he can justify himself is *the testimony of our (his) conscience*. According to verse 12, what did his *conscience testify* (confirm)?
 - a. Describe a life that is conducted in *simplicity and godly sincerity*.
2. *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief* (1 Timothy 1:15). Although Paul considered himself to be *chief of sinners*, he had a pure *conscience*. How can that be? Challenge: Use Scripture to support your answer.
3. *This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.* (Acts 24:16). What is our part *having a conscience without offense toward God and men*?
 - a. A life of perfection will never be realized on this earth. What can we do to reconcile the thoughts that condemn us or confirm our sin with our desire to have a clear *conscience*?
4. Rather than living his life with *fleshly wisdom*, Paul wrote that he *conducted* himself *by the grace of God*. What do you think it means to live *by the grace of God*?
5. Apparently, the Corinthians were trying to “read between the lines” of Paul’s letters. In verse 13, Paul declared that his writings were clear and he meant what he wrote; that he wrote in a way that they would understand what he was saying. “Reading between the lines” can be prompted by discernment. Other times, it can lead to inaccurate conclusions. Those conclusions are often arrived at because we have a faulty impression of a person’s heart or motives. Using 1 Corinthians 1:4 and 16:24, describe Paul’s heart for the Corinthians.
 - a. Why is it important to know how someone feels about you when you are being corrected by them?
 - b. How does knowing God’s love and good purposes for you, help you to receive correction from Him?

DAY SIX: Review 2 Corinthians 1:1-14

1. God *comforts us in all our tribulation*. Describe His comfort.

2. One of God's intentions for affliction is to teach us endurance or patience (2 Corinthians 1:6 and James 1:3). How have you personally discovered this to be true?
 - a. What else have you learned during times of *affliction*?

 - b. What thoughts have you had during times of affliction that you now know were false?

3. Paul was put in a position where he felt he had to defend himself. He will continue to do so throughout this letter. What have you learned so far from his example?

4. Which portion of 2 Corinthians 1-14 has challenged you the most? Why?

*Little children, let us not love [merely] in theory or in speech
but in deed and in truth (in practice and in sincerity).*

- 1 John 3:18 Amplified