

2 Corinthians is a great place to learn some important stuff about living in Christ. Not only does the book contain great Christian teachings, like "jars of clay" and "the ministry of reconciliation." but 2 Corinthians also has a wealth of information about controversies over false apostles, accusations and rumors that some thought was reserved to our generation. Who knew this stuff was in the church since the beginning?

A. Life in the New Covenant, Ch 1-5:

Chapter 1-Greetings, Plans  
Chapter 2-Forgiveness And Ministry  
Chapter 3-New Covenant  
Chapter 4-Jars Of Clay  
Chapter 5-Our Dwelling-Our Ministry

B. Hardships, Joy And Generosity, Ch 6-9:

Chapter 6-Paul's Hardships  
Chapter 7-Paul's Joy  
Chapter 8 &  
9-Generosity Encouraged

C. Confronting Accusations And Rumors, Ch 10-13:

Chapter 10-Paul Defends His Ministry  
Chapter 11-False Apostles  
Chapter 12-The Vision And The Thorn  
Chapter 13-Warnings and Greetings

**2 Corinthians 1:**

1. Based on your reading of the whole book, what do you feel was the reaction of the Corinthians to Paul's last letter?
2. What do you think Paul means by being distressed over the comfort of the Corinthians?
3. Paul talks about the hardships and despair he suffered so he would rely more fully upon God. How does this compare to the attitudes of Christians you see suffering today? How does Paul's approach to suffering relate to your approach?
4. Why do you think Paul feels he has to tell the Corinthians he has conducted himself in godly holiness and sincerity?
5. Paul seems a little defensive, when discussing his change in plans, what do you feel may have triggered this?
6. What are some experiences you've had with people who say "yes" and "no" in the same breath?
7. What do you feel Paul means by saying he didn't return to Corinth to spare them?

## **2 Corinthians 2:**

1. Why do you feel Paul decided not to visit Corinth?
2. About what do you feel Paul was anguished?
3. Who do you feel Paul believes is responsible for the grief between himself and the Corinthians?
4. Who do you feel Paul is telling them to forgive?
5. What do you feel it means to be the aroma of Christ? Are you?
6. Can you think of a situation where someone has acted like "you are the smell of death" because of your Christianity?
7. To whom do you think Paul is referring when he says they "peddle the Word of God" for a profit?
8. Can you think of anyone in current times who does this?

## **2 Corinthians 3:**

1. What do you feel would prompt Paul to bring up letters of recommendation?
2. Explain what you feel Paul means by his letter being written on tablets of human hearts?
3. Who are some people you know God is using to write such letters, today? Is God using you?
4. How long would Christianity last if no one was being used to write such letters?
5. What do you feel Paul means by saying, "The letter kills, but the spirit gives life?"
6. Describe the characteristics of someone you feel ministers from the "letter" of Christianity. What does Paul say the fruit of such ministry is?
7. What does Paul say was the reason Moses put a veil over his face? How does this differ from the Old Testament version of events?
8. Describe in your own words what Paul means concerning the veil covering "their" hearts, but being removed in Christ.
9. When someone refers to Christianity as a set of laws we must follow to be God's people, do you feel they do or do not have the veil covering their hearts? Why?
10. What do you feel Paul means by freedom being wherever the spirit of the Lord is?
11. Explain how we are transformed into Christ's likeness. Based on what Paul has written in this chapter, is this something we do by following rules?

## **2 Corinthians 4:**

1. What do you feel prompted Paul to say he doesn't use secrets, deception or distortion of God's Word in his ministry? Why?
2. When he says, "the god of this world" to whom do you feel Paul is referring?
3. Describe people you have met who seemed blinded in this way.
4. Do you feel it's possible for church members or ministers to be blinded like this? Explain!
5. What do you feel is the significance of the statement in verse 7?
6. What do verses 8 & 9 bring to your mind concerning Paul's attitude about hardship?
7. In your opinion, are modern Christians living in/with the same attitude? Explain!
8. How do you feel "being given over to death" would reveal His life?
9. Discuss some of the things you know Paul suffered in light of his description of them as "light and momentary troubles." Can you relate?
10. How do you feel it would change your experience of life if you were able to see your troubles as Paul saw his and focus on what is unseen, instead? Have you ever done this?

## **2 Corinthians 5:1-10, Our Heavenly Dwelling:**

1. What do you feel Paul means by our earthly tent being destroyed?
2. Consider how Christians, today, feel about death. Are their feelings consistent with someone who knows they have a heavenly dwelling waiting for them? Explain!
3. What do you feel Paul means by being found naked?
4. Do you know any Christians today who actually wish to die so they can be in their heavenly dwelling?
5. What does Paul say "swallows up" what is mortal? How does that differ with common understanding?
6. Why has God made us?
7. How do you feel being at home in the body keeps us away from the Lord?
8. What does it mean to live by faith and not by sight in this context?
9. Do you feel this judgment seat of Christ is to judge Christians only? Why/Why not?

## **2 Corinthians 5:11-21, The Ministry of Reconciliation:**

1. What do you feel fearing the Lord has to do with persuading people?
2. What do you feel Paul is saying is the reason for him "commending" himself?
3. Explain the difference between Christians taking pride in what is seen and taking pride in what is in the heart?
4. For whom does Paul say Christians live? What does that mean?
5. What do you feel Paul means for us to regard no one from a worldly point of view? Give examples!
6. How do you feel being in Christ would make you a new creation?
7. Explain the ministry of reconciliation.
8. What do you feel it means to be Christ's Ambassadors? Give examples!
9. How is it possible for us to become the righteousness of God?

## **2 Corinthians 6:**

1. Do you feel verse 2 still applies today? Explain!
2. What do you feel Paul means by putting stumbling blocks in people's way?
3. How do Paul's hardships compare to that of the average Christian today? The average minister? To you?
4. How can a poor man make many rich?
5. Why do you feel Paul accuses the Corinthians of withholding their affections from him?
6. Consider these facts as context:  
Paul devoted his life to reaching the lost.  
He said he would be all things to all people.  
He instructed those married to non-Christians to remain married.  
He instructed the Church to avoid immoral people who professed Christianity.  
With those points in mind, explain what you feel Paul means to not be yoked with unbelievers.
7. How do you feel a Christian can live in the world, reach the lost and yet be separate from the world?

## **2 Corinthians 7:**

1. How do you feel Paul's instruction for us to purify ourselves squares with his doctrine of salvation by grace, alone?
2. Paul seems to be responding to an attack, or at least a misunderstanding by someone in Corinth. Explain a similar situation in which you were put in a position to tell someone you loved that you harmed no one. How did it go over?
3. Paul says he does not regret that his letter caused the Corinthians sorrow because it led them to repentance. Describe any times you have seen modern Christian leaders make their followers experience sorrow in order to create repentance. If you can't think of any, what do you feel that means?
4. Share examples you know of Christians living in Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.
5. Who do you feel were the wrongdoer and the injured party to whom Paul was referring?
6. What about the Corinthians do you feel refreshed Titus?

## **2 Corinthians 8:**

1. What was it that Paul said generated the rich generosity of the Macedonians?
2. Who's idea was it for the Macedonians to give as they did? How does this compare with the teachings on giving you have heard?
3. Based on verse 7, what reputation does Corinth have in Paul's mind?
4. What do you feel would have to change in your life for the statement, "Just as you excel in everything" to apply to you?
5. Do you feel it was fair for Paul to compare the sincerity of the Corinthians with others? Why/Why not?
6. What does Paul mean by saying "the gift is acceptable according to what one has?"
7. Paul said for the Corinthians to give out of their plenty but for them not to be hard-pressed. How do you feel that compares with modern teaching on giving?
8. Paul went to great lengths to avoid any criticism of his administration of the offering by having another Christian selected to accompany them. How does this compare with the way your fellowship administers the offerings?

## **2 Corinthians 9:**

1. Why do you feel Paul is being so careful in his instructions about the Corinthian offering?
2. How do you feel Paul's lesson on sowing and reaping applies to our lives and generosity today?
3. What do you feel Paul means that no one should give under compulsion? Are there any comparisons to modern life you can offer?
4. Do you feel Paul is saying God will give us more if we're generous with what He's already given us? Explain!
5. What do you feel Paul means by saying we will be made rich in every way?
6. Paul says that our generosity "on every occasion" will result in thanksgiving to God. How do you feel Christians today are "excelling" in this grace of giving? How are you?
7. How do you feel your generosity could accompany your testimony of Christ to the unsaved so they would praise God?

## **2 Corinthians 10:**

1. What do you feel Paul means by living by "the standards of this world?"
2. Verses 4-5 are some of the most powerful words in the Bible. Apply these verses to your life with respect to enemy strongholds, arguments, pretension and thought.
3. Many suffer needless pain from sin and addiction because they feel compelled to behave a certain way. How do you feel this would change if we were able to make every thought obedient to Jesus Christ?
4. How does the description of Paul as appearing unimpressive compare to the ministers you've seen? Do you feel this is because we are choosing our minister based on worldly standards or spiritual? Explain!
5. What are some examples in your opinion, of people comparing themselves with themselves?
6. Find a Bible map and compare the area of Judea and Samaria (reached by the other 11 Apostles) with the area Paul reached with the Gospel. Do you feel Paul had something to boast about?
7. Who do you feel Paul is describing as boasting about someone else's work?

## **2 Corinthians 11:1-15, The False Apostles:**

1. In what sense do you feel Christ might be a husband to Christians?
2. Describe some ways Christians, today, might be led astray from a pure devotion to Christ?
3. What "different Gospel" do you feel Paul might be writing about?
4. What different gospels are being preached by "super" ministers today?
5. How many people who are not trained speakers are welcomed to preach about Christ at Eastridge?
6. Why do you feel Paul is making a point about ministering to them free of charge?
7. Do you know any trained Christian speakers that minister free of charge? If someone did, how would that change your attitude about the message being preached? Be honest!
8. Who do you feel was trying to "cut the ground under" Paul's ministry?
9. Do you feel the servants of the devil are still masquerading as servants of Christ? Explain!

## **2 Corinthians 11:16-33, Paul's Sufferings:**

1. What do you feel Paul means telling the Corinthians to take him as a fool?
2. Why would Paul speak so harshly to people he loves?
3. What do you feel keeps Christian leaders from rebuking their followers, today?
4. How is the suffering Paul endured a subject of boasting?
5. Would the lack of payment and frequent suffering work on a ministry resume today?  
Why/Why not?
6. What dangers do you feel most Christian leaders today would face to spread the gospel?
7. What dangers would you face?

## **2 Corinthians 12:1-10, Paul's Vision And Thorn:**

1. What do you feel Paul meant by the "third" heaven? What do you think are heavens 1 and 2?
2. When Paul says "in the body" or "out of the body" what do you feel he means?
3. Most believe the "man in Christ" Paul is referring to is himself. Explain why you agree/disagree.
4. What are some times where sharing your spiritual experience with others made you uncomfortable. Since it was an experience with God, why do you feel it was uncomfortable to share it?
5. Why would boasting about genuine experiences with God make people think more of you than is warranted?
6. Who is it that Paul says gave him a thorn in his flesh to torment him and keep him from being conceited?
7. What do you feel Paul means by "thorn in my flesh?"
8. Describe situations where you feel you may have had such a thorn.
9. How do you feel our weakness could make Christ's power perfect?
10. How does Paul's attitude about hardships, weakness, insults, persecutions and difficulties different from most Christians you know? How is it different from you?

## **2 Corinthians 12:11-21, Paul's Concern For The Corinthians:**

1. What do you think Corinth did that "drove" Paul to make a fool of himself?
2. What was Paul's reason for not being a burden on the Corinthians and how does that compare to ministry, today?
3. Paul seems to feel the churches are making a worldly connection between the amount an Apostle charges and the value of that Apostle. Can you offer some modern church examples that show things haven't changed much?
4. Paul seems to tell the Corinthians that his true value can be found in the extent of his love. Do you feel we choose Christian leaders based on their love or on more worldly factors? Explain!
5. How do you feel Paul's straightforward criticism of Corinth can strengthen them?
6. Compare the list in verse 20 with the behavior at Eastridge. How much do you feel things have changed? Improved? Gotten worse?

## **2 Corinthians 13, Final Warnings:**

1. Paul seems to make it clear he isn't going to pull any punches when he returns to Corinth. How does that compare with Christian leaders you've seen?
2. Now we get a more detailed glimpse at what Paul has stuck in his craw. Based on the previous chapters, for what "proof" do you feel the Corinthians were asking?
3. Describe some times you've seen Christians ask for "proof" that someone is in Christ or has the Holy Spirit or otherwise called by God.
4. What do you feel someone could do to "prove" a spiritual reality for someone who insists on proof?
5. Paul says "examine and test yourselves" to see if you are in the faith. Based on what you hear and see in most Christians, are they examining themselves or others? How about you?
6. How do you feel the Corinthians, by examining themselves, could come to realize Paul had not failed them?
7. How do you feel Paul's advice to "aim for perfection" would help us in our lives?
8. Do you aim for perfection or for "not too bad" in your life? Explain!