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II CORINTHIANS

STUDY GUIDE



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SCRIPTURE READING

II Corinthians

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Paul is definitely the author of II Corinthians. This letter was probably written from Macedonia.
- B. After hearing some disturbing news about the Corinthian church, Paul wrote a letter to them and sent Titus to Corinth to resolve the conflicts and difficulties that were plaguing the church.
- C. In the meantime, Paul took advantage of an opportunity to preach in Troas. He was disturbed in his spirit because he could not find Titus, so he left and went to Macedonia.
- D. Paul and Titus were reunited in Macedonia, and Titus gave Paul encouraging news about the Corinthian church.
- E. From this setting, Paul writes his second letter to the Corinthian church.

II. CHAPTER ONE

- A. Paul begins his letter by identifying himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ, declaring that he is an apostle by the will of God. (II Corinthians 1:1)
- B. Timothy is evidently with Paul at the time this letter is written. (II Corinthians 1:1)
- C. The letter is addressed to “the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints who are in Achaia.” (II Corinthians 1:1)
- D. Paul extends God’s grace and peace to those to whom he is writing. (II Corinthians 1:2)
- E. Paul declares that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is adorable. He calls Him the “Father of pity (compassion)” and the “God of all solace (comfort).” (II Corinthians 1:3)

- F. According to Paul's statement, the Father comforts us in our time of stress so that we can comfort others in their time of stress. We are responsible for sharing the same comfort that the Father has given unto us. (II Corinthians 1:4)
- G. There is an abundance of hardships in Christ, but there is also an abundance of comfort in Him. (II Corinthians 1:5)
- H. Paul makes this statement to the Corinthian church: "If we are distressed, it is for your consolation and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort." Paul feels that his example will cause the Corinthian believers to endure cheerfully the same type hardships that he has experienced. (II Corinthians 1:6)
- I. Paul's hope for the Corinthian believers is steadfast. He knows that those who share the hardships will also experience the comfort. (II Corinthians 1:7)
- J. Paul tells these believers that he suffered greatly in Asia and was burdened beyond his strength. He became so despondent that he did not think he would live through the experience. (II Corinthians 1:8)
- K. It appeared to Paul that he had received the sentence of death, but he learned to trust in God Who raises the dead, not in himself. (II Corinthians 1:9)
- L. Paul declared that not only did God deliver him from death in Asia, but he also is currently delivered, and will be delivered. (II Corinthians 1:10)
- M. The prayers of the Corinthian church played a role in Paul's deliverance. Because of answered prayer, many would give thanks for his deliverance. (II Corinthians 1:11)
- N. Paul's boast is in the witness of his conscience. His conscience testifies that in the world, he has conducted himself in sincerity. He has not sought his own interests; he has maintained a godly purity, especially to the Corinthian church. His sincerity and pureness did not come through fleshly wisdom; these attributes came through the grace of God. (II Corinthians 1:12)

- O. The things that Paul is writing in this letter are things the Corinthian believers will read and recognize. Through this letter, Paul expects them to become fully acquainted with his sincere intentions. (II Corinthians 1:13)
- P. Paul tells the Corinthian church that they have partially recognized him and that they should be proud of him, just as he will be proud of them in the day of the Lord Jesus. (II Corinthians 1:14)
- Q. Paul expresses his confidence in the Corinthian church and tells them that he was willing to come earlier so that they could benefit from a second visit. (II Corinthians 1:15)
- R. Evidently, Paul had planned to go to Corinth on his way to Macedonia, then return to Corinth after he left Macedonia. Paul's second visit to Corinth would give the Corinthian believers opportunity to help him as he traveled to Judea. (II Corinthians 1:16)
- S. Paul asks the Corinthian church if they think he makes his plans lightly, or if he makes them according to the flesh, which sometimes tends to oscillate. (II Corinthians 1:17)
- T. As sure as God is faithful, Paul declares that his word to them was not yes and no. His word was with assurance, not uncertainty. (II Corinthians 1:18)
- U. The message preached by Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, declaring Jesus to be the Son of God, was a message of certainty. (II Corinthians 1:19)
- V. All of God's promises are certain; therefore, we should give Him glory. (II Corinthians 1:20)
- W. Paul declares that it is God Who has established and anointed both him and the Corinthian believers. (II Corinthians 1:21)
- X. God has also sealed them and given unto them the Spirit in their hearts as a guarantee (down payment). (II Corinthians 1:22)
- Y. Paul calls upon God to be a witness of the statement he is about to make to the Corinthian church. He declares that the reason he has not already come to them is to spare them. (II Corinthians 1:23)

- Z. Paul understands that he does not rule the faith of the Corinthian believers, but he is a co-laborer of their joy. By faith, they stand. (II Corinthians 1:24)

III. CHAPTER TWO

- A. Paul had determined within himself not return to Corinth in sadness. (II Corinthians 2:1)
- B. If the Corinthian believers were made sad by his coming, who was going to make him happy?--Certainly not the ones he had made sad. (II Corinthians 2:2)
- C. Paul reveals the reason for writing this letter. When he goes to Corinth, he does not want to be made sad by the very ones who ought to give him the greatest joy. His joy is contingent upon their joy. By writing this letter, he hopes to resolve any conflict; then when he does go to Corinth, the believers will be glad to see him. (II Corinthians 2:3)
- D. According to Paul, he writes this letter out of much distress and anguish of heart. It even causes him to weep. It is not Paul's desire that the Corinthian believers become sad because of his anguish; he wants them to know with certainty the abundant love that he has for them. (II Corinthians 2:4)
- E. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that the distress brought about by the man who had created this problem for the church hurt the church more than he hurt Paul. (II Corinthians 2:5)
- F. The punishment incurred by this man from many of the believers had accomplished its purpose. (II Corinthians 2:6)
- G. Now, Paul instructs the Corinthian believers to forgive and comfort this man; otherwise, excessive sorrow might consume him. (II Corinthians 2:7)
- H. He exhorts them to confirm their love to him. (II Corinthians 2:8)
- I. The instruction that Paul had previously given to the Corinthian church concerning this man was to test their submissiveness. (II Corinthians 2:9)

- J. Paul assures the Corinthian believers that whomever they forgive he will forgive also. His forgiveness will flow through them in the expression of Christ. (II Corinthians 2:10)
- K. This act of forgiveness was to prevent Satan from taking advantage of the situation. Believers must not be ignorant of Satan's methods of operation. (II Corinthians 2:11)
- L. When Paul arrives at Troas to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, a door of opportunity is opened to him by the Lord. (II Corinthians 2:12)
- M. Paul could not relax in his spirit because he could not find Titus, so he left Troas and went to Macedonia. (II Corinthians 2:13)
- N. Paul declares that God's grace always gives him the victory through Christ, and that God is using him to reveal the fragrance of His knowledge wherever he goes. (II Corinthians 2:14)
- O. Among both the saved and unsaved, Paul is pleasing to the Lord. (II Corinthians 2:15)
- P. Paul reveals that as ministers of Jesus Christ, they are the smell of death to those who remain in spiritual death, but to those who accept Jesus as their Savior, they are a fragrance of life. Who is competent for such a task as this? Only those whom the Lord has appointed can adequately present Him in the way He desires. (II Corinthians 2:16)
- Q. Paul says that they are not like many who are misrepresenting the word of God. Their message is presented in purity in the presence of God. (II Corinthians 2:17)

IV. CHAPTER THREE

- A. Paul asks the Corinthian church if he needs letters of commendation to give to them or if he needs letters of commendation from them. (II Corinthians 3:1)
- B. Paul declares that the Corinthian believers are his letter of commendation; they are written in his heart. They are also known and read by all. (II Corinthians 3:2)

- C. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they are an epistle of Christ, that has been ministered by he and his associates. This letter was not written with ink; it was written by the Spirit of the living God. It was not written on tablets of stone; it was written in their heart. (II Corinthians 3:3)
- D. Paul states that his confidence in God comes through Christ. (II Corinthians 3:4)
- E. Paul recognizes that his accomplishments are not because of his own ability. He honors God, Who has enabled him and given him the ability to minister effectively. (II Corinthians 3:5)
- F. God enabled Paul to be a minister of the new covenant. Paul's emphasis is not on the written word of the law; he does not impose rules and regulations. His emphasis is on the Spirit which gives life. A lifeless letter of rules and regulations kills, but the Spirit of God produces life. (II Corinthians 3:6)
- G. Paul refers to the law of Moses as a ministry of death. After receiving the law from God, Moses left the mountain and returned to camp. The people were not able to look upon the face of Moses because of the brightness of his countenance. Symbolizing what would happen to the law, the brightness of Moses' countenance gradually faded away. (II Corinthians 3:7; Exodus 34:29-35)
- H. The ministry of the Spirit is more glorious than the ministry of the law. (II Corinthians 3:8)
- I. The law which condemned man had glory, but the ministry of righteousness far exceeds the glory of the law. (II Corinthians 3:9)
- J. The law, which had glory, is rendered non-glorious when compared to the glory of righteousness. (II Corinthians 3:10)
- K. The law, which was passing away, had an element of glory, but righteousness through Jesus is permanent and excels the glory of the law. (II Corinthians 3:11)
- L. Because of his hope in the righteousness of Jesus which remains, Paul was very bold in his proclamation of the gospel. (II Corinthians 3:12)

- M. In contrast to Paul's openness, which revealed the glory of God, Moses hid his face so the children of Israel could not see the brightness of his countenance, which like the law, was passing away. (II Corinthians 3:13)
- N. The minds of the Israelites could not comprehend God's glory; therefore, they were never transformed. Even today, their minds still do not understand the Old Testament. Only through Jesus is one capable of understanding God's Word and His glory. Only through Jesus can this transformation take place that will cause one to become like Him. (II Corinthians 3:14)
- O. Paul declares that even now when the law of Moses is read, the hearts of the Israelites do not understand what God is actually saying. (II Corinthians 3:15)
- P. When one turns to the Lord, his heart is enlightened and he is given the ability to understand. (II Corinthians 3:16)
- Q. The Lord is the Spirit Who gives life to His Word. His Spirit liberates people from the bondage of the law and its death sentence and reveals the heart of the Father. (II Corinthians 3:17)
- R. The hearts of the believers are given the capacity to understand. Like looking into a mirror, we see the glory of the Lord. As we behold His glory, we are transformed into the image we see. Our transformation does not occur all at once; it is a process. We go from glory to glory. This spiritual growth is brought about by the Spirit of the Lord. (II Corinthians 3:18)

V. CHAPTER FOUR

- A. Paul recognizes the ministry that has been given to him and realizes that it came as a result of God's mercy; therefore, he does not become discouraged and think of quitting. (II Corinthians 4:1)
- B. Paul says that he has abandoned the hidden, disgraceful things and that he does not walk in deception; neither does he misrepresent the word of God. Through the expression of truth, he presents himself to the conscience of people in the presence of God. (II Corinthians 4:2)
- C. He declares that if the gospel he preaches is not recognized, it is those who are perishing who do not recognize it. (II Corinthians 4:3)

- D. The reason some do not recognize the gospel is that the god of this age has blinded the unbeliever's understanding, thereby preventing the enlightenment that comes through the gospel of Christ, Who is the image of God. (II Corinthians 4:4)
- E. Paul is not preaching about himself; he is proclaiming Jesus the Christ as Lord and himself a slave for the cause of Jesus. (II Corinthians 4:5)
- F. The same God Who commanded light to shine out of darkness has illuminated our hearts with the knowledge of the glory of God through the person of Jesus. (II Corinthians 4:6)
- G. Paul declares that we have this treasure (the gospel of Jesus) in earthen vessels (our bodies) that the superior power may be recognized as God, not us. (II Corinthians 4:7; Romans 1:16)
- H. In every way, Paul experiences extreme difficulty, but he does not allow the circumstances to constrain him. At times, it seems that there is no way out, but he does not get discouraged. (II Corinthians 4:8)
- I. Even in persecution, he is not forsaken, and when he is cast down, he does not perish. (II Corinthians 4:9)
- J. At all times, he bears the death of Jesus in his body so that the life of Jesus will be manifested through his body. (II Corinthians 4:10)
- K. In regard to himself and other believers, Paul says, "We who are alive surrender to death through Jesus so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our physical bodies." (II Corinthians 4:11)
- L. Paul tells the Corinthian church that while death is working in him, life is working in them. (II Corinthians 4:12)
- M. Paul says he has the same spirit of faith as that of the writer of Psalm 116. The psalmist proclaimed: "I believed and therefore I spoke." Paul declares that he also believes; therefore, he speaks. (II Corinthians 4:13; Psalm 116:10)
- N. Paul's confidence comes in knowing that the Lord Jesus has been resurrected. Because of Jesus' resurrection, he and the Corinthian believers will also be resurrected through Him. (II Corinthians 4:14)

- O. Throughout the Corinthian church, the gratitude of many excels because of the abundant grace; therefore, God is glorified. (II Corinthians 4:15)
- P. Because of abounding grace and God being glorified, Paul does not become discouraged. Even though the outward man is decaying, the inward man is being made new daily. (II Corinthians 4:16)
- Q. Paul says his light, oppressive circumstances are momentary, and the end result will be an abundance of glory that far exceeds any hardships he experiences. (II Corinthians 4:17)
- R. Paul does not look at the circumstances; he looks through the eyes of faith. He does not focus on what he sees; he focuses on what he does not see. The circumstances that he sees are temporary, but the things that he sees through the eyes of faith are eternal. (II Corinthians 4:18)

VI. CHAPTER FIVE

- A. The “earthly house” mentioned in this verse refers to the physical body. The “building of God” refers to the glorified body the believers will receive when the Lord comes for the saints. The body in which we now live is a temporary home; the body which we will receive is our permanent home. (II Corinthians 5:1)
- B. Paul speaks of being in a difficult place. He desires to be covered completely with his permanent home. He is not interested in just exiting his physical body; he longs for the promised transition to occur, at which time he will be permanently housed in an eternal state. (II Corinthians 5:2-3)
- C. The believers, who still reside in their physical bodies, long for the day when the physical is exchanged for the eternal. When this event occurs, mortality will be swallowed up by life. (II Corinthians 5:4)
- D. God has fashioned us for this phenomenon, and He has given us the guarantee of His Holy Spirit, assuring us that it will occur. (II Corinthians 5:5)
- E. We are always confident that while we are at home in this physical body, we are absent from the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:6)

- F. Although our physical bodies are not where the Lord is, we know that we are in relationship with Him. We live by faith, not by physical sight. (II Corinthians 5:7)
- G. Paul boldly declares that his preference would be to vacate his physical body so he could go home and be with the Lord. (II Corinthians 5:8)
- H. Whether in his physical body or absent from his physical body, Paul wants to please the Lord fully. (II Corinthians 5:9)
- I. Everyone must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, at which time each one will be rewarded according to the deeds done in the physical body, both good and bad. (II Corinthians 5:10)
- J. Since we know the fear of the Lord, we should do our best to convince people to fear the Lord also. Like Paul, we should realize that God knows who we are and what we do. We should also desire that others perceive who we are and what we do. (II Corinthians 5:11)
- K. Paul is not trying to commend himself to the Corinthians, but he is giving them an opportunity to boast on his behalf before those whose heart does not match their appearance. (II Corinthians 5:12)
- L. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that if he appears insane, it is for God, and if he appears to be of sound mind, it is for them. (II Corinthians 5:13)
- M. The love of God was the compelling force that caused Paul to be the way he was and to minister the way he did. Paul had come to this conclusion: "If One died for all, then all were dead." (II Corinthians 5:14)
- N. Because Jesus died for everyone, those who live should no longer live for themselves. Believers should live for Jesus, Who died for them and rose again. (II Corinthians 5:15)
- O. Paul decides not to know anyone after the flesh, not even Jesus. (II Corinthians 5:16)
- P. He declares that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old departs, and new comes into existence. (II Corinthians 5:17)

- Q. All comes from God, Who Himself has reconciled us through Jesus Christ. He has given to us the ministry of restoration. (II Corinthians 5:18)
- R. God was in Christ, Himself reconciling the world. He did not take inventory of their transgressions. He has placed in us the word of restoration. (II Corinthians 5:19)
- S. We are representatives of Christ. In this manner, God invites through us. We petition in place of Christ--be reconciled to God. (II Corinthians 5:20)
- T. Jesus, Who did not sin, was made to be sin for us, so that we could be made the righteousness of God by Him. (II Corinthians 5:21)

VII. CHAPTER SIX

- A. As a co-laborer with Jesus, Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers not to receive the grace of God without purpose. (II Corinthians 6:1)
- B. Paul quotes from Isaiah 49:8: "At the proper time I will listen to you. On the day of salvation I will help you." (II Corinthians 6:2)
- C. After quoting from Isaiah, Paul assures the Corinthian believers that the proper time is **now**, and that the day of salvation is **now**. (II Corinthians 6:3; Galatians 4:4)
- D. Paul says that he has not given occasion to sin in even one thing so that the ministry cannot be blamed. In everything, he has presented himself favorably as a minister of God--in patience, in oppressive circumstances, in confinement, in distress, in injury, in imprisonments, in disorder, in strenuous work, in lack of sleep, in fastings, in cleanness, in knowledge, in tolerance, in usefulness, in the Holy Spirit, and in sincere love. (II Corinthians 6:4-6)

- E. Paul continues to validate his blameless ministry. He has shown himself to be a minister of God in the word of truth, in the power of God, in the instrument of righteousness on the right and left hands, in honor and dishonor, in evil reports and good reports, when accused of being an imposter, although he was authentic, as unknown, yet well known, as dying, yet living, as chastened, but not killed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, and as having nothing, yet possessing all things. (II Corinthians 6:7-10)
- F. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that both his mouth and heart are open to them. (II Corinthians 6:11)
- G. The Corinthian believers were not restricted by Paul; they were restricted by their own affections. (II Corinthians 6:12)
- H. Paul addresses the Corinthian believers as children. He asks them to be open to him, just as he has been open to them. (II Corinthians 6:13)
- I. Paul exhorts these believers not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. (Do not associate with those who do not agree with your godly beliefs.) Righteousness does not have fellowship with unrighteousness, and light has no communion with darkness; they have nothing in common. (II Corinthians 6:14)
- J. Christ has no agreement with Belial; a believer has no inheritance with an unbeliever; and the temple of God has no agreement with idols. (II Corinthians 6:15-16)
- K. Paul states that believers are the temple of the living God. He supports his statement by quoting from Leviticus 26:11-12: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (II Corinthians 6:16)
- L. Because believers are the temple of God, and because believers have different thoughts and goals from unbelievers, they are commanded by the Lord to “Come out from among them and be separate. Do not touch what is unclean.” (II Corinthians 6:17)
- M. To those who follow the Lord’s command, He says, “I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters.” (II Corinthians 6:17-18)

VIII. CHAPTER SEVEN

- A. Because we have the promise of being received into God's family, we must cleanse ourselves from anything that defiles the flesh or spirit. We should complete holiness (separation) in the fear of God. (II Corinthians 7:1)
- B. Paul asks the Corinthian believers to receive them, assuring these believers that neither he nor his associates has wronged, corrupted, or cheated anyone. (II Corinthians 7:2)
- C. Paul is not making this request in a condemning way. As long as Paul lives, these Corinthian believers will remain in his heart. (II Corinthians 7:3)
- D. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that he has great confidence in them, and he speaks boastfully of them. These believers have filled Paul with comfort, so in the midst all his tribulations, he remains in good spirits. (II Corinthians 7:4)
- E. When Paul arrived in Macedonia, he could not physically relax. Everywhere he turned he was restricted. On the outside, he faced controversies; within, there were fears. (II Corinthians 7:5)
- F. God, Who comforts those who are dejected or humiliated, comforted Paul through the arrival of Titus. (II Corinthians 7:6)
- G. Not only was Paul comforted at the arrival of Titus, but he also received comfort from Titus' report of the Corinthian believers. Titus told Paul of their longing, their mourning, and their zeal for him; consequently, Paul became more cheerful. (II Corinthians 7:7)
- H. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that he does not regret making them sorrowful with his letter; however, after he wrote the letter, he did have regrets. Now, he sees that his previous letter produced only a temporary uneasiness. (II Corinthians 7:8)
- I. Paul rejoices because the sadness experienced by the Corinthian believers led them to repentance. He assures them that their sadness was godly in nature; his letter certainly was not meant to injure them. (II Corinthians 7:9)

- J. Godly sadness produces repentance, which leads to one's rescue; therefore, it should not be regretted. The sadness of the world produces death. (II Corinthians 7:10)
- K. The godly sorrow of the Corinthian church produced positive results. Paul's rebuke caused them to become more serious; they were apologetic for their apathy; they became indignant over the sin in the church; they were frightful over the way they had handled this situation; their desire for godliness increased; they became zealous; and retribution was given to the violator. (II Corinthians 7:11)
- L. Paul's purpose for writing his previous letter was not for the benefit of the violator or the one who had been violated; he wrote the letter for the benefit of the church. He wanted his care for them to be apparent. (II Corinthians 7:12)
- M. The Corinthian church's positive response to Paul's appeal brought contentment to him. He received even more joy when he saw the joy of Titus, who had been refreshed in spirit by the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 7:13)
- N. Paul makes no apologies for any boasting that he has done to Titus regarding the Corinthian church. Titus was an eyewitness that Paul's boasting was truth. (II Corinthians 7:14)
- O. When Titus recalls the obedience of the Corinthian church, his feelings for them increase. They had received him with fear and trembling. (II Corinthians 7:15)
- P. Paul rejoices in his confidence in the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 7:16)

IX. CHAPTER EIGHT

- A. Paul makes the Corinthian church aware of the grace of God that was bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia. (II Corinthians 8:1)
- B. In many trials of affliction, the abundant joy and the profound poverty of these Macedonian churches were surpassed by their the generosity. (II Corinthians 8:2)
- C. Not only were the Macedonian churches willing to give what they had, but they also were willing to give beyond their means. (II Corinthians 8:3)

- D. The Macedonian churches earnestly requested that Paul receive their gift, thereby giving them the opportunity to participate in the ministry to the saints. (II Corinthians 8:4)
- E. Paul declares that the Macedonian churches not only did as he hoped, but they also exceeded his expectations. First, they gave themselves to the Lord; then, they gave themselves to Paul, fulfilling God's will. (II Corinthians 8:5)
- F. Paul wants Titus to finish what has already been initiated in the Corinthian church. He wants the Corinthian church, like the Macedonian churches, to be given the same opportunity to participate in the ministry to the saints. (II Corinthians 8:6)
- G. In reference to giving to the needs of the saints, Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to excel in grace, just as they have excelled in faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and in their love for him. (II Corinthians 8:7)
- H. Paul is not commanding them to give; he is testing the sincerity of their love by comparing it with the deep sincerity of others. (II Corinthians 8:8)
- I. He uses the gift of Jesus as an example of giving. Jesus was willing to give up His riches in heaven to come to earth so that we could be delivered from our poverty in earth and share in His riches in heaven. (II Corinthians 8:9)
- J. Although Paul does not command the Corinthian believers to give, he does advise them to do what they had previously planned to do for their own benefit. (II Corinthian 8:10)
- K. Paul encourages the Corinthian church to finish what they started the previous year. It is now time to demonstrate. (II Corinthians 8:11)
- L. Giving begins with a willing heart. One gives according to what he has; he is not obligated to give beyond his means. (II Corinthians 8:12)
- M. Paul did not want the Corinthian church burdened while others were eased; he wanted them to ease the burden of others with their surplus. (II Corinthians 8:13)

- N. The principle to be gleaned from Paul's instructions is realized in the word "equality." We should not be comfortable with abundance when others are in need. (II Corinthians 8:14)
- O. Paul uses the illustration of gathering manna to prove his point. Although some gathered more than others, there was none left over; everyone's need was met. (II Corinthians 8:15; Exodus 16:18)
- P. Paul gives thanks to God for the deep sincerity that Titus has for the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 8:16)
- Q. Not only did Titus accept Paul's appeal to revisit the Corinthian church, he volunteered to go. (II Corinthians 8:17)
- R. Accompanying Titus on his return visit is someone referred to by Paul as "the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches." (II Corinthians 8:18)
- S. Paul further identifies this brother as the one whom the churches selected to travel with them to deliver their gift. God will receive glory for this benevolent endeavor. (II Corinthians 8:19)
- T. To avoid criticism, those chosen to deliver this generous gift were cautious in the way they handled it. (II Corinthians 8:20)
- U. As these delivered the gift that had been entrusted to them, they were determined to do what was right in the sight of both God and the people. (II Corinthians 8:21)
- V. Paul assures the Corinthian church that those coming to them to receive their gift are reputable men. He emphasizes the dependability of "the brother" and confirms his confidence in the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 8:22)
- W. Paul declares Titus to be his partner and co-laborer and the brethren to be messengers of the churches and the glory of Christ. (II Corinthians 8:23)
- X. Paul asks the Corinthian church to demonstrate their love to these men. He wants the Corinthian believers to validate his boasting of them. (II Corinthians 8:24)

X. CHAPTER NINE

- A. Paul does not feel that it is necessary for him to write about ministering to the saints. The Corinthian church had already expressed their willingness, and Paul had boasted to the churches of Macedonia of what they would do. As a matter of fact, the zeal of the Corinthian church to minister to the saints had provoked others to do the same. (II Corinthians 9:1-2)
- B. The reason for Paul sending the brethren to Corinth is to prepare the Corinthian church for this contribution. Paul does not want his boasting of these believers to be in vain; neither does he want them to be embarrassed when he comes to receive their gift. (II Corinthians 9:3-4)
- C. In Paul's estimation, it is necessary to send the brethren before him to prepare the Corinthian church for the presentation of their generous gift that they had previously promised. He wants their giving to be from generosity, not obligation. (II Corinthians 9:5)
- D. As Paul instructs the Corinthian believers, he reveals a spiritual principle that applies to everyone: "One who sows meagerly will reap meagerly; one who sows generously will reap generously." (II Corinthians 9:6)
- E. Each one should give as he purposes in his heart. One should not give grudgingly or through coercion. God loves those who willingly give. (II Corinthians 9:7)
- F. God is able to make one's gift excel to the point that it becomes beneficial to the one who gave it, thereby bringing satisfaction for all his good deeds. (II Corinthians 9:8)
- G. To confirm his statement, Paul quotes from Psalm 112:9: "He has dispersed abroad; He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." (II Corinthians 9:9)
- H. As Paul invokes a blessing on the Corinthian believers, he once again reveals a spiritual principle that applies to everyone--He Who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food also supplies and multiplies the seed sown and increases the fruits of one's righteousness. (II Corinthians 9:10)

- I. Paul expresses his desire for those who give to abound in everything because of their generosity. The generosity of these believers causes Paul to give thanks to God. (II Corinthians 9:11)
- J. Not only does the distribution of their service minister to the needs of saints, but it also produces an abundance of gratitude to God. (II Corinthians 9:12)
- K. Because of their giving to this need, the Corinthian believers have proved themselves. People will praise God for the obedience that accompanies their confession of the gospel of Christ and for their generosity in sharing with the saints who are in need. (II Corinthians 9:13)
- L. God will also be glorified through the prayers of the saints whose needs have been met as they pray and yearn for those who ministered to them. (II Corinthians 9:14)
- M. Paul gives thanks to God for His inexplicable gift. (II Corinthians 9:15)

XI. CHAPTER TEN

- A. Paul pleads with the Corinthian church through the meekness and gentleness of Christ. He says that when he is with them, he is humbled, but when he is away from them, he is bold. (II Corinthians 10:1)
- B. Paul pleads with the Corinthian church not to force him to become bold when he visits them. The boldness of which he speaks would be directed to those who think he walks according to the flesh. (II Corinthians 10:2)
- C. Paul reveals another spiritual principle that should be practiced by all believers: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.” (II Corinthians 10:3)
- D. The weapons of the believer are not carnal; they are powerful through God. Their purpose is to demolish strongholds, to completely tear down reasoning and barriers that rise against the knowledge of God, and to capture all thoughts, making them submissive to Christ. (II Corinthians 10:4-5)
- E. When the believer becomes completely compliant, he is prepared to punish all disobedience. (II Corinthians 10:6)

- F. Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to look at those before them, then he says, “If anyone thinks that he is Christ’s, he should think further. Just as he is Christ, we also are Christ’s.” (II Corinthians 10:7)
- G. When Paul boasts of the authority given to him by the Lord, it is for the edification of the church, not for their destruction; therefore, he is not ashamed to declare his authority. (II Corinthians 10:8)
- H. Paul did not want the Corinthian believers to think that he was trying to scare them with his letters. (II Corinthians 10:9)
- I. Some of the Corinthian believers thought Paul’s letters were serious and forceful, but they thought his physical appearance was weak and his speech awful. (II Corinthians 10:10)
- J. For those who thought of Paul in this way, he assured them that as he appeared in his letters, so he would conduct himself in their presence. (II Corinthians 10:11)
- K. Paul reveals another spiritual principle with this comment: “We dare not class ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” (II Corinthians 10:12)
- L. Paul tells the Corinthian church that he will not boast excessively. He chooses to limit his boasting to the sphere apportioned to him and extended to the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 10:13)
- M. Paul is the one who went to Corinth and introduced the Corinthians to the gospel of Jesus. He is not interested in boasting in another’s labor. He had labored among the Corinthian believers; now, he wants to see their faith grow so that his ministry among them will greatly expand. (II Corinthians 10:14-15)
- N. He also desires to preach the gospel in areas beyond Corinth where other people have not yet heard the gospel of Jesus. (II Corinthians 10:16)
- O. Paul declares that anyone who boasts should boast in the Lord. (II Corinthians 10:17)

- P. It is not the one who presents himself that is approved; it is the one whom the Lord presents that is approved. (II Corinthians 10:18)

XII. CHAPTER ELEVEN

- A. Paul asks the Corinthian church to put up with a little of his foolishness, then assures them that they are already doing that. (II Corinthians 11:1)
- B. He tells them that he is jealous for them with a godly jealousy and that he has promised them to one Husband, to Whom he will present them as a chaste virgin. (II Corinthians 11:2)
- C. Paul is concerned about the minds of the Corinthian believers becoming corrupted and turning them away from the sincerity and purity in Christ. He does not want them to be like Eve and succumb to deception. (II Corinthians 11:3)
- D. Paul charges the Corinthians church with tolerating those who were preaching a different gospel than he preached. They were receiving ministers who had a different spirit and message than Paul's. (II Corinthians 11:4)
- E. Paul declared that he was not inferior to even the most distinguished apostles. (II Corinthians 11:5)
- F. Although Paul perceived himself unskilled in speaking, he lets these believers know that he does not lack knowledge. His knowledge has already been revealed to the entire church. (II Corinthians 11:6)
- G. Paul asks the Corinthian church this question: "Did I sin by humbling myself so you could be exalted?" When Paul went to Corinth, he preached the gospel freely. He did not receive any support from the Corinthian believers. (II Corinthians 11:7)
- H. Paul was actually supported by other churches while he was ministering at Corinth. (II Corinthians 11:8)
- I. Paul did not burden the Corinthian believers with his needs. The brethren who came from Macedonia met his needs. Paul had not been burdensome to the Corinthian church in the past, and he did not intend to be a burden to them in the future. (II Corinthians 11:9)

- J. Paul carried the truth of Christ in him, and he was determined that no one would silence his boasting in the area of Achaia. He had ministered without charge, thereby demonstrating his love and concern for the Corinthians. (II Corinthians 11:10)
- K. Paul was adamant about his decision to minister freely. Both He and God knew the love that Paul had for the Corinthian believers. (II Corinthians 11:11)
- L. Paul reveals the reason for his actions. He does not want to give opportunity to those who desire to be categorized with him. (II Corinthians 11:12)
- M. According to Paul, the ministers portraying themselves to be equal to him are false apostles. He calls them deceitful workers who disguise themselves to appear as apostles of Christ. (II Corinthians 11:13)
- N. We should not be surprised that false apostles disguise themselves to appear as apostles of Christ because Satan disguises himself to appear as a messenger of illumination. (II Corinthians 11:14)
- O. It should not astonish us that Satan's ministers disguise themselves to be ministers of righteousness; however, in the end, they will be rewarded according to their deeds. (II Corinthians 11:15)
- P. Paul asks not to be thought of as a fool, but if that is the perception of some, then he asks them to at least receive him as such so he continues to boast to a small degree. (II Corinthians 11:16)
- Q. Paul admits that his self-confident boasting is not from the Lord. He is just speaking foolishly. (II Corinthians 11:17)
- R. Just as many others have boasted of the flesh, Paul decides to also boast of the flesh. (II Corinthians 11:18)
- S. In ironic contrast, Paul tells the Corinthian church that, in perceiving themselves to be wise, they gladly entertain fools. (II Corinthians 11:19)
- T. According to Paul, the Corinthian believers were guilty of tolerating those who enslaved them, preyed upon them, took from them, exalted themselves, or struck their face. (II Corinthians 11:20)

- U. Paul admits that he is too weak to disgrace them but declares that he is as bold as anyone. Once again, he says he is speaking foolishly. (II Corinthians 11:21)

- V. Paul begins asking the Corinthian church a series of questions:
 - 1. Are they Hebrews? So am I! (II Corinthians 11:22)
 - 2. Are they Israelites? So am I! (II Corinthians 11:22)
 - 3. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I! (II Corinthians 11:22)
 - 4. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more of a minister! (II Corinthians 11:23)
 - 5. Again, Paul says he is speaking foolishly. (II Corinthians 11:23)

- W. In verses 23-28, Paul reveals many of the hardships he has undergone.
 - 1. Paul declares that he had suffered more pain than all these self-proclaimed apostles. (II Corinthians 11:23)
 - 2. He had been in prison more. (II Corinthians 11:23)
 - 3. He had been excessively wounded. (II Corinthians 11:23)
 - 4. He had faced death many times. (II Corinthians 11:23)
 - 5. Fives times he had received thirty-nine stripes from the Jews. (II Corinthians 11:24)
 - 6. He had been beaten with a rod three times. (II Corinthians 11:25)
 - 7. Once, he was stoned. (II Corinthians 11:25)
 - 8. He was shipwrecked three times. (II Corinthians 11:25)
 - 9. He spent a day and night in the sea. (II Corinthians 11:25)
 - 10. He traveled often. (II Corinthians 11:26)

- 11. He had faced the danger of water, robbers, his own countrymen, and the heathen. He faced danger in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, and among false brethren. (II Corinthians 11:26)
- 12. He had faced the danger of exhaustion and strenuous work. Many times, he had gone without sleep. (II Corinthians 11:27)
- 13. He had been hungry and thirsty; he had gone without food many times. (II Corinthians 11:27)
- 14. He also had been cold and without clothes. (II Corinthians 11:27)
- 15. Besides all the hardships that Paul had encountered, he daily experienced deep concern for the churches. (II Corinthians 11:28)
- X. In asking two questions, Paul reveals his sensitivity to others: He identifies with the weaknesses of others, and he is provoked when others are ensnared. (II Corinthians 11:29)
- Y. Paul says, "If it is necessary for me to boast, I will boast in my weaknesses." (II Corinthians 11:30)
- Z. Paul calls on the God and Father of Jesus the Christ to bear record that he is not lying. (II Corinthians 11:31)
- AA. Paul tells of his experience at Damascus, where he was lowered down a wall in a basket to escape the governor, who had set a guard around the city. The governor was subordinate to Aretas the king. (II Corinthians 11:32-33)

XIII. CHAPTER TWELVE

- A. Although Paul knows it is not really profitable for him to boast, he decides to talk about the visions and revelations the Lord has given to him. (II Corinthians 12:1)
- B. Referring to himself, Paul tells of a person who, fourteen years prior to this letter, was caught up into the third heaven--paradise. He is not certain if the experience was physical or spiritual; only God knows. During this experience, he heard words that were impossible for him to express. According to Paul, it is not right for a person to speak what he heard. (II Corinthians 12:2-4)

- C. He is willing to boast of this experience, but not of himself. The boasting he chooses to do concerning himself revolves around his weaknesses. (II Corinthians 12:5)
- D. Naturally, Paul wants to boast, but he refrains from being foolish; however, he is determined to speak the truth. Although Paul wants the Corinthian church to respect him as God's messenger to them, he does not want people to exalt him. (II Corinthians 12:6)
- E. To prevent Paul from becoming prideful, he was given a "thorn in the flesh." His thorn in the flesh is described as "a messenger of Satan" to buffet him. (II Corinthians 12:7)
 - 1. The phrase "thorn in the flesh" refers to something that brings discomfort and pain.
 - 2. The description of Paul's "thorn" reveals that it is a messenger of Satan. The intent of this messenger is to physically oppose God's messenger. Wherever Paul went to preach the gospel of Jesus, he was physically opposed.
 - 3. In Numbers 33:55, the inhabitants of the Promised Land who were not driven out by the Israelites are referred to as "pricks in your eyes" and "thorns in your sides."
 - 4. In Joshua 23:13, the inhabitants of the Promised Land who were not driven out by the Israelites are referred to as "scourges in your sides" and "thorns in your eyes."
 - 5. In Judges 2:3, the inhabitants of the Promised Land who were not driven out by the Israelites are referred to as "thorns in your sides."
 - 6. Not one of the scripture references indicates that Paul's thorn was related to sickness or disease. All of them refer to those who oppose and try to prevent one from enjoying the promises of God.
- F. Three times, Paul earnestly appealed to God to remove the messenger from him. (II Corinthians 12:8)
- G. God's response to Paul's request was: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." (II Corinthians 12:9)

- H. God's statement to Paul reveals why Paul chose to boast in his weaknesses. It was during these times that the power of God was manifested through him. (II Corinthians 12:9)
- I. Paul declares that he sanctions the times he is in weakness, or is insulted and treated disrespectfully, threatened, persecuted, or faces calamity for Christ's sake. It is during these adverse conditions that are beyond his control that God manifests His power. (II Corinthians 12:10)
 - 1. The adversities mentioned in this verse also give insight to Paul's "thorn in the flesh."
 - 2. These adversities were in opposition to Paul's ministry.
- J. Paul tells the Corinthian believers that they have made it necessary for him to become as a fool in boasting. They should have been boasting of him. (II Corinthians 12:11)
- K. Paul assures the Corinthian church that he is not inferior to the most distinguished apostles, yet he realizes that he is nothing. (II Corinthians 12:11)
- L. Paul had proven himself to be an apostle to the Corinthian church by demonstration. The extraordinary events that occurred and the power displayed through his ministry proved his validity as an apostle. He was also persistent, even in difficult times. (II Corinthians 12:12)
- M. The Corinthian church was not inferior to any church, except in supporting Paul. Paul asks for their forgiveness. (II Corinthians 12:13)
- N. Paul is prepared to visit the Corinthians again. This visit would be the third time he had been with them. His intention was not to be burdensome to them. He was not coming to take from them; he was coming to give to them. He pictured himself as a father who provides for his children. He did not want their possessions; he wanted them. (II Corinthians 12:14)
- O. Not only is Paul willing to bear the expense of this trip, but he is willing also to give himself for their sakes. Yet, the more he loves them, the less he is loved. (II Corinthians 12:15)

- P. Paul was never an imposition to the Corinthian church. Because he had not taken advantage of them in any way, they had no defense against Paul's rationale. (II Corinthians 12:16)
- Q. Neither Paul nor anyone sent to them by Paul had taken advantage of the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 12:17)
- R. Neither Titus nor the brother who accompanied him took advantage of the Corinthian church. They displayed the same spirit as Paul and conducted themselves in the same manner as Paul. (II Corinthians 12:18)
- S. Paul is not just giving an account of himself to the Corinthian church; he is giving an account of himself before God of the things he has accomplished in Jesus. (II Corinthians 12:19)
- T. The things Paul has said and done were for the spiritual development of the Corinthian church. (II Corinthians 12:19)
- U. Paul is uneasy about the Corinthian believers. He does not want to find them conducting themselves in an undesirable way, and he does not want them to see him as one confronting their actions. (II Corinthians 12:20)
- V. Paul does not want to encounter quarrels, jealousy, anger, underhanded schemes, slander, gossip, pride, or disorder when he visits Corinth. (II Corinthians 12:20)
- W. If he encounters these things, he will have to deal with them. If he has to deal with these problems, he will not be highly esteemed by the congregation, and he will mourn for those who have sinned and not repented of their impurities, fornication, and lusts. (II Corinthians 12:21)

XIV. CHAPTER THIRTEEN

- A. Quoting from Deuteronomy 19:15, Paul confirms another spiritual principle: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established." He makes this statement in reference to his third visit to Corinth. (II Corinthians 13:1)
- B. Paul had spoken to the Corinthian believers about their sins. He writes this letter warning them about their sins, and promises to confront those who are sinning, once he arrives in Corinth. (II Corinthians 13:2)

- C. Paul's confrontation with those who are sinning will give evidence that Christ is speaking through him. He assures them that Christ is not weak to them; He is effective in them. (II Corinthians 13:3)
- D. Christ was crucified in weakness, but He lives by the power of God. Paul also recognizes himself to be weak; therefore, his ministry to the Corinthian church will be through the power of God. (II Corinthians 13:4)
- E. Paul exhorts the Corinthian believers to examine themselves to see if they are in "the faith." He wants them to recognize for themselves that Jesus is in them, unless they have been regarded as unacceptable. (II Corinthians 13:5)
- F. Paul is confident that the Corinthian church will know that he is not regarded as unacceptable to God. (II Corinthians 13:6)
- G. He prays to God that the Corinthian believers abstain from evil, not for his benefit, but theirs. Although he may appear to be rejected, he wants these believers to be virtuous. (II Corinthians 13:7)
- H. Paul says he is not able to do anything against the truth; the things he does are done for the truth. (II Corinthians 13:8)
- I. He assures the Corinthian believers that he is cheerful when he is weak and they are strong. He desires that they be thoroughly equipped. (II Corinthians 13:9)
- J. Paul writes this letter to the Corinthian church so that he will not have to deal harshly with them when he comes. Paul desires to use the authority the Lord has given him for their edification, not their destruction. (II Corinthians 13:10)
- K. Paul concludes this letter by telling the brethren to be well, to be thoroughly complete and comforted. He encourages them to exercise their minds and to be peaceful, assuring them that the God of love and peace will be with them. (II Corinthians 13:11)
- L. He tells them to greet one another with a holy kiss, which was a cultural greeting. (II Corinthians 13:12)
- M. Paul sends greetings from all the saints. (II Corinthians 13:13)

- N. Paul closes his letter with this blessing: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” (II Corinthians 13:14)