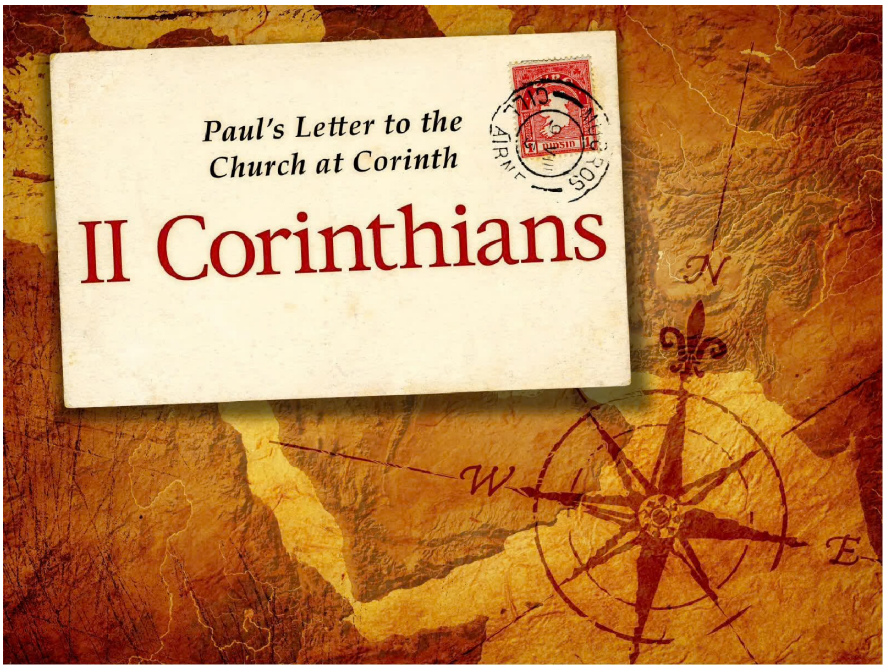
A Guided Inductive Study of 2nd Corinthians



"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15

A practical study of
Paul's Letter to 2nd Corinthians

by Pastor Richard W. LaFountain

How To Study

Read the Scripture:
Reading the Scripture is important. Read every word. Don't skip. Don't just read your favorite verses. Read it all. Think about what you are reading. Is there any word or statement you do not understand? Is there anything that confuses you or seems inconsistent with other Scriptures? Is there anything you would like to research? Use at least two translations.

Translations:
I suggest New King James, if you like the old wording. The New International Version is helpful. And the English Standard Version is also refreshing. For this study I am using the NKJV because I grew up with KJV and its rhythms are familiar to me. You can use other translations.

Chapter by Chapter:
We are going to study the Book of Romans chapter by chapter. Some chapters are longer and have much to think about. Those chapters we have divided into segments so you cover Romans 8 in four weeks instead of one week. We assume you will use one chapter each week. If you are using this for daily readings then you might find it too difficult to answer the questions. That's okay. My hope, however, is that you use is in a weekly Bible study. Anyone can lead it.

Highlighted Verses:
I have chosen to highlight what I feel are key verses. You may think others are more important. That is okay. Write that in your personal journal or if you are studying in a group write down other verses you feel are important. Oh, and every chapter has one key verse.

Discussion Questions:
We have not attempted to add commentary because we believe the Scriptures speak for themselves and the Holy

Spirit can teach us as much as another person's commentary. I have added suggested questions to answer and discuss. This is especially helpful when studying with a group. You are not limited to my questions, ask your own. In a self-directed study it will be harder to consider your answers to the questions. In a group, however, one question might stimulate other questions. You do not have to answer every question. Use what is helpful and useful and leave the rest.

Personal Edification:
I have often taught my students to look for certain things in ever chapter of the Bible. You will not find all five in every chapter, but you should be able to find two or three. Write them down in a journal or share it with a group. It is called the PEPSI acronym.

Search for Treasure: (P.E.P.S.I.)

- A **P**-romise to claim.
- An **E**-xample to follow.
- A **P**-rayer concern.
- A **S**-in to avoid.
- An **I**-nstruction to obey.

Personal Questions:

- What Verse Challenged you?
- What Verse Encouraged you?
- What Verse Convicted you?
- What Verse Confused you?
- What Verse Startled you?
- What Verse Frightened you?

Group Questions:

1. What verse stands out to you in this chapter? Why?
2. What verse causes you to struggle with its demand? Why?
3. What verse encourages your faith the most? Why?
4. Is there a command here you find most difficult to obey? Why?
5. Is there a promise here you want to claim? What?
6. Is there something you need to pray about in this passage? Why?
7. Is there a word / topic here you need to explore more deeply? What?

2 Corinthians 1 - Comfort

Key verses to think about.

1:3-4 Comfort
Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

1:8 -10 Despaired of Life
For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver *us,*

1:20 All God's Promises
For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

1:21-22 God's Seal
Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Main Truth:

God's purpose is to comfort us in all our trials through his absolute promises.

Questions:

1 Why does God allow trials in us?

2 How does God comfort us in our trials?

3 Have you ever had such trials that you dispaired of life?

4 What was Paul referring to that he felt he was sentenced to die? (See book of Acts)

5 What are some of your favorite promises of God? Do you keep a list of God's promises to you? What do you do with God's promises?

6 What is God's seal on us? Do you have that seal in your heart? Do you ever doubt it?

2 Corinthians 2 - Forgive

Key verses to think about.

Paul is writing to follow up on the man who was having a sexual relationship with his father's wife (evidently his step mother 1 Corinthians 5:1-11)

1 Corinthians 5:1 Gross Immorality in the Church
It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife.

1 Corinthians 5:5 Church Discipline
To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

1 Corinthians 5:11 Shun a Brother in Sin
But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or greedy, or an idolater, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or a swindler; with such an one no not to eat.

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2 Corinthians 2:6-8 Restoring a Fallen Brother
The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

2:10-11 Forgive Him
Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake

2:11 Satan Outwits with Schemes
in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.
2:14-16 Aroma of Christ

But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life.

2:17 No Peddling the Word
Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

Main Truth:
Forgive even as Christ has forgiven you.

Questions:

1 Has your church ever publicly disciplined someone, who is putting him or her, and shunning them? Is it biblical to do so? In what cases? (See Matthew 18:18-20)

2 If Satan can outwit us with his schemes, then what are his schemed?

3 What is involved with forgiving someone a sin or an offense? Is it just an internal heart thing, or is there something tangible we are to do?

4 We are to be captives of Christ, or slaves of Jesus Christ, just as rebellious slaves are paraded as the victor's spoils, so Christ parades us, to the world that stinks, but to the redeemed it's the sweet smell of full surrender to Christ.

5 We all are to fill the world with the sweet fragrance of Christ. Either that or we have the fragrance of death. What is the fragrance others perceive from you? Is it sweet most days, or is it sour?

2 Corinthians 3 - You Are Being Read

Key verses to think about.

3:2 You Are a Letter
You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.

3:5 Our Competence
Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

3:17 Freedom of the Spirit
Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

3:18 Transformed by His Glory
We all, who with unveiled faces contemplate (reflect) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Main Truth:

You are somebody's only epistle, known and read of all men.

Questions.

1 Are you somebody's only Bible they will ever read? Whose? What are they reading when they see you?

2 Do you ever feel competent to serve Christ? Where do you get your competence? How do you know if you are competent?

3 What does Paul mean when he says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."? What freedom? Freedom from what? Freedom to do what? Is it freedom to do anything we want?

4 What does it mean to "contemplate the Lord's glory"? If that is what changes us to be like Christ, how do we do that? What is "an

unveiled face"? How do I get that? How can you reflect the glory of the Lord today?

5 The Greek for reflect or contemplate uses a word for using a mirror. King James translates it more literally.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." How does that translation help you understand what Paul means?

2 Corinthians 4 - Satan Blinds Men

Key verses to think about.

4:2 Renounced Hidden Things of Darkness
Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

4:4 The God of this World
The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4:6 Shined in Our Hearts
For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

4:7 Treasure in Jars of Clay
But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

4:16 We Do Not Lose Heart
Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

4:17 Momentary Troubles
For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

4:18 We Fix Our Eyes on Jesus
So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Main Truth:

Satan blinds the minds of those who do not believe. We believe only because God made his light shine into us so that we could believe.

Questions:

1 What does it mean “to distort the Word of God”? Do you ever hear preaching that distorts the word of God? What gets distorted?

2 Satan has blinded the eyes of non-believers. How then can we open their eyes to understand and receive the gospel? Can yiu open anyone’s eyes? If not, then why witness, why preach?

3 Paul says we are “jars of clay.” What does that mean? Can you think of other Scriptures that use that same analogy? Where?

4 Paul certainly had troubles (verses 8-12). He calls them “light and momentary troubles.” What have been your momentary troubles? Can you list some?

5 Paul says our troubles achieve something? What does troubles, trials and temptations achieve? (See James 1)

6 How can we fix our eyes on what is not seen? What other Scriptures refer to “fixing our eyes” on something. What is that something we are to fix our eyes on? (Hebrews 3:1)

7 Is your inward man being renewed day by day? If so, how? What does that look like? How do we renew our inner man?

2 Corinthians 5 - Home in Heaven

Key verses to think about.

5:1 Our Earthly Tent
For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

5:5 The Deposit
Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

5:8 Absent from the Body
We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

5:10 Judgement Seat of Christ
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

5:14 Christ's Love Compels
For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

5:15 No Longer I But Christ
And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

5:17 New Creation
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

5:20 Ambassadors
We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Main Truth:

We live in a temporary tent while our real home is in heaven where Chrst sits at the right hand of the Father. We live for that day.

Questions:

1 There are a lot of topics in this chapter. Which do you want to explore?

- Our Earthly tent
- Our Deposit
- Absent from the body
- The Judgement seat
- The Love of Christ
- Our New Creation
- We Are Ambassadors

2 Much of what Paul says here is about our assurance of heaven. Who have yiu told about heaven in recent days?

3 Are you longing to be absent from this body snd present with the Lord? Are you longing for heaven? If not, why not?

4 Are you afraid to die? Do you fear the judgement of God? Why or why not?

5 Are you an ambassador for Christ? What does an ambassador do? Or do you feel that is the job for a pastor or missionary?

6 Paul says you live no longer for yourself but for him who died for you. Is that true of you? Who do you live for? Is Christ the center of your life or just another add on?

2 Corinthians 6 - Suffering

Key verses to think about.

6:4-5 Suffering for Christ
Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;

6:7 Weapons
The weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

6:14 Unequally Yoked
Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

6:17 Be Separate
Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

Main Truth:

All who live godly in Christ Jesus WILL suffer persecution.

Questions:

1 Have you ever suffered for being a Christian? Have you ever been persecuted?
If not why not?

2 What are the “weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left”? Do you have them? Do you ever use them? How? If not, why not?

3 Are you in bed with unbelievers? Do you run with the wrong crowd? Do you hang out with unbelievers?

2 Corinthians 7 - Godly Sorrow

Key verses to think about.

7:1 These Promises
Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

7:10 Godly Sorrow
Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

7:11 Godly Sorrow Produces Repentance
See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

Main Truth:

Godly sorrow leads us to repentance.

Questions:

1 “Having these promises…” What promises is he referring to from chapter 6?
2 How do we perfect holiness in the fear of God?

3 What is godly sorrow? Have you ever experienced godly sorrow? When? Where? Why?

4 According to Paul, godly sorrow produces in us and effect. In your own words, what is that effect? (Earnestness, eagerness, indignation, alarm, longing, concern, and readiness to see justice done.)

5 What alarm goes off when you see outright sin in the church? Are you ever alarmed, embarrassed, or angry over sin in the congregation?

6 Can you think of issues in the body of Christ, or in your church that grieve you to deal with the sin and sinner? Or is it none of your business?

2 Corinthians 8 - Giving

Key verses to think about.

8:2-3 Give As You Are Able
In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.

8:9 Jesus' Example
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

8:12 Willingness is the Issue
For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

8:14 Equal Sacrifice not Eq Giving
At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality,

Main Truth:

Though Jesus was rich he became poor to reach you and me.

Questions:

1 Does collecting an offering during church bother you? Why?

2 Do you believe tithing is a principle or a command? It both?

3 Sacrificial giving is giving till it hurts. David said, "I will not offer the Lord that which costs me nothing." Do you agree with him?

4 Should the rich give because they have more, or should all of us give a portion of what we have? What portion is fair and equitable to all?

5 First Corinthians 13:3 says, "If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not

have love, I gain nothing." Is that teaching that if you have love you don't need to give to the poor? What is it teaching?

6 How does the love of (YOUR OWN MONEY) demonstrate itself in your life?

1 Timothy 6:10 says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

2 Corinthians 9 - Sowing & Reaping

Key verses to think about.

9:6 Give Willingly
Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

9:7 Decide in Your Heart
Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

9:8 God is Able to Bless You
God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

9:10 God Wiil Reward You
Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

9:12 Giving is Thanks to God
This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

9:15 God's Priceless Gift: Jesus
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Main Truth:

God rewards the cheerful and generous giver.

Questions:

1 Do you believe that he who sows sparingly will reap sparingly?

2 Paul promotes “planned giving”. “Let each determine in his heart what he will give.” Do you have a plan for your giving?

3 Do you believe God is able to bless you even when you give of your own lack, that is sacrificialky? Can you think of other verses that promise this?

4 Have you seen God reward you for your sacrificial giving? Do you ever give sacrificially? When?

2 Corinthians 10 - Our Weapons

Key verses to think about.

10:3-5 Not of the World
For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension (high thing) that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

10:12 We Do Not Compare Ourselves
We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

10:17 Boast in the Lord
But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

Main Truth:

We are involved in spiritual warfare against the powers of darkness. You are either a victim or a victor.

Questions:

1 What do you think are the weapons of our warfare? (See Ephesians 6:

2 Do you actively participate in spiritual warfare against the devil? How?

3 Paul says we “demolish strongholds, arguments, and pretensions.” What are those strongholds of the enemy?

4 Paul says we “take captive thoughts.” What are the thoughts that you fight against? Some are internal thoughts, some external thoughts. Name some thoughts that defeat you.

5 If we are to bring “every thought” into captivity to obedience to Christ, what are some thoughts you have that are not obedient to Christ?

2 Corinthians 11 - A Different Gospel

Key verses to think about.

11:4 A Different Gospel
For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

11:14-15 Satan Masquerades
And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

11:23-28 Paul's Sufferings
Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Main Truth:

Satan masquerades as an angel of light pedaling a different gospel.

Questions:

1 Paul warns us of a differerent Jesus, different spirit, different gospel being preached and many are deceived. What variant gospels do you hear about today? (Explain what is wrong with a health and wealth gospel, Mormon gospel, enneagram gospel, theologically liberal gospel, LBGTQ gospel, hell-less gospel, everybody-is-going-to heaven gospel, a progressive gospel, and a legalistic gospel.)

2 What are the warning signs of a cult or a different gospel? (a different Savior, different Scriptures, a different Salvation other than grace alone through faith.)

3 Make a list of Paul's sufferings from this passage. Now do you think a Christian should be exempt from suffering, sickness, opposition, and attacks of the enemy?

4 Now list your sufferings over the past year. How does that compare to Paul's trials, troubles, and pains?

2 Corinthians 12 - Weaknesses

Key verses to think about.

12:5 Boast in Infirmities
Yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

12:7 Messenger of Satan
And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet (torment) me, lest I be exalted above measure.

12:8-9 I Sought the Lord
Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

12:10 I Delight in Weaknesses
That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

12:15 I Willingly Spend
So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?

Main Truth:

We should rejoice in our trials and weaknesses because it's through those trials that Christ's strength is demonstrated.

Questions:

1 Do you have any weaknesses? What are they?

2 Do you have a thorn in the flesh? What is it? What do you do about it?

3 Are you being beat up by a messenger of Satan? How?

4 Do you ever rejoice in your weaknesses, your sicknesses, or your trials? Name some tgat you rejoice in.

5 Can you say,"When I am weak, then I am strong"? Do you rejoice in your trials, troubles and temptations? Or do you complain about them?

6 What is your greatest trial as a believer? What things have gone wrong for you in the last 6 months?

2 Corinthians 13 - Examine Yourself

Key verses to think about.

13:5 Examine Yourselves
Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

13:14 Grace Be With You
May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Main Truth:

We should test ourselves whether we are in the faith or just pretending to believe.

Questions:

1 How can you examine whether you are truly a believer?

2 How can we test ourselves to see if our faith is genuine? What is disingenuous faith?

3 What are some tests of whether someone is a believer?

4 What are the essential marks of a true believer?