

STUDYING THE BOOK OF 2 CORINTHIANS ***IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS***

Lesson 1 - The God of All Comfort - 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

2CO 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia:

2CO 1:2 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2CO 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, [4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. [5] For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. [6] If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. [7] And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

2CO 1:8 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. [9] Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. [10] He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, [11] as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our* behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 1 - The God of All Comfort - 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

1. How did Paul describe God? (1:3)
2. Why do you think Paul began his letter by praising God? (1:3)
3. What does God do when we are troubled? (1:4)
4. How does God involve Himself in our troubles? (1:4-5)
5. What did Paul's distress produce for the Corinthians? (1:6)

6. In what way is patient endurance produced in Christians? (1:6)
7. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about the hardships he had endured? (1:8)
8. Why did Paul despair? (1:8)
9. How did Paul's confidence in God enable him to rise above his despair? (1:8-10)
10. For what reason did Paul endure suffering? (1:9)
11. How did the Corinthians help Paul through his hardships? (1:11)
12. What was the gracious favor Paul anticipated? (1:11)

Lesson 2 - Paul's Change of Plans - 2 Corinthians 1:12-24

2CO 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. [13] For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, [14] as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2CO 1:15 Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. [16] I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. [17] When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

2CO 1:18 But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." [19] For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas* and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." [20] For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. [21] Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, [22] set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

2CO 1:23 I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. [24] Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Lesson 2 - Paul's Change of Plans - 2 Corinthians 1:12-24

13. How did Paul support his claim that he had been sincere with the Corinthians? (1:12)
14. What accusation from the Corinthians was Paul most likely responding to? (1:12-14)
15. Why did Paul say that the Corinthians could boast of him just as he would boast of them? (1:14)
16. Why had Paul planned to visit the Corinthian church? (1:15)
17. Why did Paul change his travel plans? (1:15-16)
18. How did Paul's opponents at Corinth use his change of plans against him? (1:17)
19. What is the chief feature of God's promises? (1:18-22)
20. How did Paul explain how reliable his words were? (1:18-23)
21. What did Paul emphasize to strengthen his self-defense? (1:22)
22. How does God's Spirit act as a deposit? (1:22)
23. What is guaranteed to come? (1:22)
24. Why did Paul decide not to return to Corinth? (1:23)
25. What was Paul's main purpose in working with the Corinthian church? (1:24)