

II Corinthians

Participant Handout - 1-Hour Bible Study Review Session

Session Overview

Part	Time	Focus
Part 1	7 minutes	Introduction & Overview
Part 2	25 minutes	25-Question Multiple-Choice Quiz
Part 3	28 minutes	Guided Review & Discussion

Overall Review Theme: Faithful ministry, transformed Christian living, Gospel truth, generous grace, and strength through Christ.

Part 1 - Introduction to II Corinthians (10 Minutes)

Introduction Overview

Paul the Apostle wrote II Corinthians approximately A.D. 55-57 from Macedonia to the believers at Corinth. Corinth was a prosperous commercial centre and the capital of the Roman province of Achaia, but it was also known for moral corruption and sophisticated pagan culture. The church Paul had founded there continued to face worldliness, moral problems, internal strife, doctrinal deviations, and attacks upon Paul's apostolic authority.

II Corinthians is one of Paul's most personal letters. Following earlier correspondence and a painful visit, Paul wrote in the setting of renewed challenges to his ministry. His purpose included defending the legitimacy of his apostleship, answering accusations, exposing false teachers, restoring the Corinthians to wholehearted fellowship with God, and strengthening their confidence in the true Gospel.

The letter moves through three broad areas. Chapters 1-7 focus on Paul's apostolic ministry, his sufferings, God's comfort, reconciliation, and his relief when Titus brought encouraging news of the Corinthians' response. Chapters 8-9 focus on the grace of Christian giving and the collection for needy believers in Jerusalem. Chapters 10-13 return to Paul's defence of his God-given authority, the danger of false teachers, the true marks of faithful ministry, strength in weakness, and the need for spiritual self-examination.

Across the seven studies, II Corinthians calls believers to live as transformed people: comforted by God and able to comfort others; living epistles changed by the Spirit; new creatures and ambassadors for Christ; marked by godly repentance and generous giving; using spiritual rather than carnal weapons; guarding the simplicity of the Gospel; and depending upon Christ's sufficient grace while continually examining whether we are in the faith.

Part 3 - Guided Review & Discussion (25 Minutes)

Study 1 - Triumph through Christ - II Corinthians 1-2

God is "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (II Corinthians 1:3). Paul shows that affliction can deepen dependence on God and equip believers to comfort others. He explains that God's promises are sure even when human plans change. Church discipline must aim at repentance and restoration; once repentance is evident, forgiveness and love should prevent Satan from gaining an advantage. Paul closes this section with the picture of God causing believers to "triumph in Christ," spreading the knowledge of Christ like a savour.

Discussion questions

- How can an experience of God's comfort become a ministry to someone else who is suffering?
- What balance should a church maintain between correction, forgiveness, and restoration when a person genuinely repents?

Study 2 - Living Epistles - II Corinthians 3-4

The transformed lives of the Corinthians were Paul's true letters of recommendation - "the epistle of Christ" written by the Spirit on the heart. Paul contrasts the Old Covenant written on stone with the life-giving ministry of the Spirit in the New Covenant. As believers behold the Lord, they are changed "from glory to glory." Ministry must handle God's Word honestly, because Satan blinds unbelieving minds. The Gospel treasure is carried in "earthen vessels" so that the excellency of the power is seen to be of God. Eternal perspective enables believers to "faint not" in affliction.

Discussion questions

- What should people be able to 'read' about Christ from the life of a believer?
- How does remembering the 'eternal weight of glory' help us persevere when we feel pressed or discouraged?

Study 3 - New Creatures in Christ - II Corinthians 5-6

Paul directs believers beyond the temporary "earthly house" to the eternal hope God has prepared, teaching them to "walk by faith, not by sight." Because all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, ministry is carried out with holy urgency. In Christ, a person becomes a "new creature" and receives the ministry of reconciliation; believers therefore serve as ambassadors for Christ. Paul also calls the church to holiness, warning against unequal yokes and binding alliances that compromise devotion to God.

Discussion questions

- What practical evidence should show that someone has become a 'new creature' in Christ?
- What does being an ambassador for Christ require in our speech, relationships, conduct, and witness?

Study 4 - Godly Repentance and the Grace of Generous Giving - II Corinthians 7-8

Titus brought Paul the welcome report that the Corinthians had responded to correction with earnest desire, mourning, and renewed affection. Their sorrow was not merely regret; it was "godly sorrow" that produced repentance and visible change. Paul then turns to benevolent giving, using the Macedonian churches as an example of willing, sacrificial generosity. He also stresses integrity and accountability: trusted brethren were involved in handling the offering so that the ministry would be honourable before both God and men.

Discussion questions

- What is the difference between godly sorrow that leads to repentance and worldly sorrow that stops at regret?
- Why are transparency, shared responsibility, and a good reputation important when handling church resources?

Study 5 - The Grace of Generous Living and Spiritual Authority in Christian Service - II Corinthians 9-10

Christian giving is to be purposeful, willing, generous, and cheerful: "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 9:7). Giving meets needs, produces thanksgiving to God, and rests on confidence in God's sufficiency. In chapter 10 Paul defends spiritual authority and reminds believers that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" but mighty through God. Christian ministry must reject fleshly comparison and self-commendation; the proper standard is God's approval, and "he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Discussion questions

- How can we cultivate cheerful, faith-filled generosity rather than giving from pressure or mere duty?
- What are examples of spiritual strongholds today, and how should believers confront them with spiritual rather than carnal weapons?

Study 6 - Guarding the Truth - II Corinthians 11

Paul expresses godly jealousy because he fears that the Corinthians may be corrupted from "the simplicity that is in Christ." False teachers can present "another Jesus," "another spirit," and "another gospel," while appearing as ministers of righteousness. Believers must therefore test teaching by Scripture, the true Gospel, and spiritual fruit. Paul contrasts self-promoting ministry with costly service: his own 'résumé' is a catalogue of sufferings, sacrifices, dangers, and deep concern for the churches. True ministry is measured by faithfulness and love, not appearance or applause.

Discussion questions

- What practical tests can we use to distinguish biblical teaching from error that sounds spiritual?

- How does Paul's willingness to surrender personal rights and endure hardship challenge modern ideas of successful ministry?

Study 7 - Strength in Weakness and the Call to Spiritual Examination - II Corinthians 12-13

Paul speaks cautiously of extraordinary revelations because spiritual privilege is no ground for pride. His "thorn in the flesh" kept him humble, and God's answer to repeated prayer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9). Paul sought the Corinthians themselves, not their possessions, and warned against strife, envy, gossip, disorder, and impurity. He closes by calling believers to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" and to pursue truth, maturity, restoration, unity, and peace.

Discussion questions

- What can we learn when God gives sustaining grace instead of removing the difficulty for which we have prayed?
- How can regular, Scripture-based self-examination help a Christian grow stronger without becoming discouraged or self-absorbed?