Women’s Bible Study

September 23, 2025

2 Corinthians Overview and Chapter 1:1-11

WELCOME!

* Introductions
* Introduce Self

This Year: 2 Corinthians

* Question: What do you know about 2 Corinthians?
* Anyone know any themes or well-known verses in 2 Corinthians?

Structure of the study:

* Meet monthly on the 4rd Tuesday (most months)
* Calendar on Church Center
* Additional connection: Discord
* Anchored: Resources, other Bible studies

Binders:

* Syllabus and Schedule
* Outline
* Text-write all over!
* Study guides-highlight, study
* Notes and Study Guides for the next month distributed each month and final copies posted after the study.
* Additionally, discussion posts, intro video each month, recorded lessons, extra material will be on Discord. (This month’s Discussion Question: Introductions)

Goal of Bible study:

* To grow in the knowledge of the Lord in order to treasure Him more fully and to reflect Him more accurately as we are conformed to His image.
* To be informed by the Word and conformed in our thinking and actions
* To grow together as a group as together we discover God’s revealed Word to us.

*“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” (2 Cor. 3:18)*

What is the Bible?

* A collection of 66 “books” written in 3 languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) by over 40 authors over a time span of around 1500 years.
* The Bible is not written “to” us but it is written “for” us. (Ben Harmon)
* At the simplest level, it is the history and story of ancient Israel. Yet in it, is the larger story of God’s revelation of Himself to mankind. Is the Bible a history book? Yes, but it’s not only a history book. Is it a book of morals? Certainly, in it we find what is right or wrong, but a book of morality is not its purpose either. It is primarily *theological*, revealing the God who is behind every page.

🡪The revealing of the Creator, man’s origin, our purpose, why the world is the way that it is, death, life, pain and struggle play out in the unfolding drama. Hovering over each page is the Spirit of God as He uses history and human authors to reveal Himself in one continuous story across time, space, and cultures.

* We are reading the very words of God for us!

2 Peter 1:20-21: ***20****knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.****21****For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Recognize various levels of Bible study background:

* All of us can treasure the Lord and His Word more and grow deeper in our love for Him.

Group Discussion:

* Work through the Overview and 2 Cor. 1:1-11 study guide.

Teaching-Overview

Where are we in redemptive history?

* Jesus has ascended to heaven, God has sent the promised “Comforter” in the Holy Spirit. The church is being established as the works of Jesus are continued through the Spirit empowered witness of the church.
* The gospel is advancing from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.
* Paul has encountered Christ, come to know Him, and has been sent out Christ through the church in Antioch as a “witness to the Gentiles.”
* Paul is writing during the end of his “3rd missionary journey,” possibly during a short stay in Philippi.

Review of 1 Corinthians

Cultural and social setting and the impact that had on their identity

* How did Paul come to know the church in Corinth? (Acts 18)How long did he stay there?
* What do we know about the city of Corinth? Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia and the seat of the governor. The ancient geographer Strabo attributed the city’s economic success to its strategic location. Home to 250,000 people.
* Greek city, Roman province made up of citizens who could hold office and residents, as well as a local Senate, commissioners, etc. A person’s wealth and status were highly valued.
* All of this evidence together suggests that Paul’s Corinth was at one time the New York, Los Angeles, or Las Vegas of the ancient world.
* How did the culture of the city impact the church? All of this played into the problems in the church that Paul was writing to address.
* What were some of the issues the church was wrestling with that led to Paul’s first letter to them? (Disunity and factions, immorality, litigation, questions of marriage, food sacrificed to idols, men and women during worship gatherings, the Lord’s supper, and spiritual giftings) He received a report about them and a letter from them.
* What was Paul’s primary message? Because of the resurrection, believers are to live “resurrected lives” that are informed and transformed by the gospel in all spheres of life. We have a new identity in Christ which is to transform our lives in our current cultural context.

So…..2 Corinthians-What happened after Paul’s 1st letter?

* Paul had intended to leave Ephesus after Pentecost (late spring), travel through Macedonia and then spend the winter in Corinth before returning to Judea (1 Cor. 16:6-8).
* Before he leaves, he receives more bad news about the church, likely from Timothy after he delivered 1st Corinthians that was so serious, Paul decides to go immediately to Corinth. This becomes known as “the painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1) in which Paul confronts their sin likely resulting in anger, quarrelling, and jealousy (2 Cor. 12:20).
* While there, he tells them that he plans to see them twice again-once before going to Macedonia and then again afterwards (2 Cor. 1:15-24).
* However, after returning to Ephesus, he decides to change that plan and to go back to the original plan of going to Macedonia first and only visiting them once. He says he does this in order to not cause further grief. (2 Cor. 2:1-2). Instead, he writes a letter (lost) known as the “severe letter” (2 Cor. 2:3-4, 7:8-12).
* Paul waits for months while traveling to Troas and Macedonia before hearing back from Titus who took the letter to them. Finally, he receives good news that they have responded rightly to his “severe letter” (2 Cor. 7:7-16).
* Yet, there were still some issues to address so Paul writes this letter known to us as 2 Corinthians.

Ongoing Issues in Corinth

* Questions over Paul’s changing travel plans
* Lack of completion of the collection they were to do for the saints in Jerusalem
* Some are still entangled in immorality
* Paul’s unwillingness to be paid like other “apostles” led them to question his apostleship.
* Of greatest concern was a group of Jewish Christian “Super Apostles” who question Paul’s legitimacy as an apostle because of his weakness, sufferings, and afflictions.
* Preparation for his 3rd and final visit.

🡪Paul does return to Corinth after this letter, staying 3 months, and likely writing the book of Romans while there before returning to Jerusalem with the collection. (Corinth became the point of convergence for collections from Macedonia, Asia, and Galatia-Discuss collection)

Outline:

1. Overview and Introduction/Comfort in Affliction (1:1-11)
2. Paul’s personal defense-His Commendation is from God (1:12-3:18)
3. Paul’s defense of his ministry-Do not lose heart (4-5)
4. Paul’s Appeal-God’s grace is not in vain (6-7)
5. Call to complete the collection for the saints (8-9)
6. Paul’s apostolic authority over the “super apostles” (10:1-11:15)
7. Boasting in weakness/His power made perfect (11:16-12:13)
8. Preparation for Paul’s third visit/Closing (12:14-13:14)

Summary:

1:1-11-Introduction (Sept.)

1:12-7:16-Paul’s defense: Personal and Ministry (Oct., Nov., Dec.)

8-9-Giving generously (Jan.)

10:1-12:13-The rebellious minority (Feb. March)

12:14-13:10-Preparations for a third visit (April)

13:11-14-Final Greetings (April)

**Break**

Teaching 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

2 Corinthians 1:1-2: Introduction

* Paul immediately introduces himself as an “apostle of Christ Jesus” and reiterates that his apostleship comes from God.
* He is with Timothy (in Macedonia-likely near Philippi) who is listed as a brother. While Timothy is with him, Paul is the author of the letter.
* The recipients-the church of God that is in Corinth as well as all the saints in Achaia. Paul reasserts their identity-they belong to God. The gospel apparently had spread to other areas in the region as well. (Discuss occasion/epistle genre)
* Paul greets them with “grace and peace” from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (trinity). From the beginning of the letter, Paul is seeking reconciliation and restored relationship with them.
* Traditional NT letter Pattern: Introduction-Greeting-Thanksgiving/Prayer. Paul deviates from that with this letter for a purpose. He wants to thank God for who He is and His work in Paul’s life and to use that to encourage the Corinthians. And then to ask for their prayers for him. Before jumping into the next section, I want to set it up a bit because this is the main idea Paul wants the Corinthians to take away from this passage.

🡪Question-Can you think of a time when you connected with someone because of a shared experience? (Travel, sport, movie, experience)

Story-Identical twins/Twins Club/Twins festival (The point is we understand something when we experience it and we find “comfort” or encouragement in being with others who have also had that same experience)

* Need: Do you ever feel like no one really understands something you are experiencing? What about when we are not just talking about understanding an experience but what about a deep hurt-Suffering. What about understanding infertility, cancer, miscarriage, broken relationships, injustice, pain, death. And while people may come alongside us, unless they have walked that road, they don’t really understand.
* Paul was someone who understood what it was like to suffer. As the believers in Corinth are facing suffering, Paul is going to show them where to find comfort and how their trials can be turned into a testimony.

2 Corinthians 1:3-7: Benediction-*Comforted to be a Comfort*

* Rather than a traditional word of thanksgiving or prayer, Paul offers a benediction reminiscent of an OT Jewish offering of praise.
* Again, we see God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ together in Paul’s praise. (Note difference-God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
* Paul offers praise to God for being the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

-God is portrayed not only as One who gives comfort but as the Source of all comfort. It’s not merely what He does, but it’s Who He is-The Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

* Define terms:

-mercies=compassion, pity, sympathy

-afflictions/suffering=anything causing pain or distress, trouble, anguish, burden

-comfort=to aid, help, instill with courage, to be present, to call to one’s side

In other words:

🡪He is the Father of compassion and God of all present help who instills us with courage, coming alongside us in all of our distress, troubles, and burdens.

* “So that”-We are comforted by God so that we can bring comfort to others. We are enabled by God’s comfort to us in affliction to comfort others in theirs.

🡪The comfort that we receive from God is not meant to stop with us but is meant to continue to flow into the lives of others. Our suffering is purposeful and will be used by God to comfort others.

* The reason we can comfort others through our afflictions is because when we suffer, we are sharing in Christ’s sufferings. What are Christ’s sufferings? As His sufferings brought us comfort, so too will our sufferings bring comfort to others as we share His comfort with others. (Imaging Christ in suffering)

🡪Just as Jesus looked to His Heavenly Father and was comforted and by His sufferings, we are comforted, now we “follow Him” in suffering, looking to our Heavenly Father, and then sharing the comfort of Christ with others.

**🡪We are comforted in Christ in order to comfort others**. (Dead Sea-Bowl vs. Funnel example)

* That is Paul’s encouragement and exhortation to the believers in Corinth as they face suffering. What if we don’t feel comforted ourselves and the thought of having anything to comfort others with is overwhelming. If that’s you right now-hang on. We are going to come back to that at the end.
* Paul goes on to give himself as an example of how his suffering was used by God to bring them comfort. Their salvation came through Paul’s sufferings-the very thing that they see as weakness in him is what brought them life.

2 Corinthians 1:8-11: Paul’s Affliction in Asia

* Paul tells them of his sufferings-Rather than tell them of how many have come to faith, how many churches he’s established, he instead shares his struggles, trials, and darkest moments.
* Paul is recounting his time in Asia (Acts 19:23-20:1) in which he was in great danger and despair.

🡪Paul states they were “utterly burdened,” “beyond our strength,” “despaired of life itself,” and were under the “sentence of death.” How is God the God of all comfort in that situation? (Look at definition of comfort) As the Source of comfort, He comforts by His very Presence in our trials.

* What did Paul’s afflictions drive him to do? Rely not on self but on God. What God? The God who raises the dead.
* Paul testifies that He did deliver and that He will deliver again.
* So, what is Paul’s resolute response? He sets his hope that He will deliver again.
* How does Paul ask them to help? To pray. What will that accomplish? Thanksgiving for God’s response to their prayers (role of prayer).
* Paul’s hope in them is unshaken-he believes God will use all of these things for reconciliation and restoration with them.

Application:

* I don’t know what everyone walked in here with but we all walked in carrying something. Paul’s message to the Corinthians encourages us in 3 ways:

1. Our trials are meant to cause us to rely on God and not ourselves. We can “set our hope that He will deliver” when we are suffering because He is the Father of mercies-full of compassion Who is quick to come to our aid. So if that is where you are today with heavy and hard burdens “despairing of life itself” you are in the place to receive God’s comfort. I have been there and sometimes those burdens are so heavy you can hardly get through the day. For you, look to Him, rely on Him and set your hope that He will deliver and believe it or not, will one day use your trial to be a comfort to others.
2. Our trials and the comfort God gives to us in them is not meant to stop with us but just as we are comforted through Christ’s sufferings, so too are to comfort others with the same comfort we have received from God. Who are you reaching out to in order to bring the comfort of Christ to them? Challenge tonight-Consider the darkness of the world these past couple of weeks. My encouragement to you is to find the right balance between being aware and being consumed. Yes, in national or global tragedy, we pray, we ask God to work and to strengthen those hurting and He will use our prayers to bring comfort. But what if right now we all had to show what we had spent our time doing this week? Our social media screen time? Our TV watching hours? Or maybe other “distractions” that keep us busy but not busy with caring for those who are hurting right around us? Is that what Paul means by bringing comfort to others? Just observing situations from afar cannot really bring the comfort of Christ. Or to say it another way, how much time have we spent this week with our next-door neighbors or coworkers or family members who don’t know Christ? We can’t bring the comfort of Christ to people in their suffering if we don’t know their afflictions and are IN their lives. If we really want to be a part of what God is doing in the world right now, we need to be involved personally in the lives of those around us.
3. We have a God who did just that-He did not stay far off but He came to us in our brokenness and suffered and died so that He can also share His comfort with us as well. More on that in a brief closing but let’s have a time of discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. Where in your life right now do you need to rely on God and set your hope on His deliverance?
2. What trials have you walked through and been comforted by God that He may use to comfort others? Who specifically do want to reach out to this month?
3. How does it comfort you to know that Christ came to us and was willing to suffer so that He could share His eternal comfort with us? How does Paul’s encouragement to the Corinthians change the way we think about our own trials?

Summary:

After a painful visit and a severe letter, Paul finally gets word that the church in Corinth has responded rightly so he pens 2 Corinthians to help restore their relationship, encourage them in their trials, and address some lingering issues regarding the collection for the poor, immorality, and those who question Paul’s legitimacy as an apostle because of his weaknesses. Paul points to how weakness and suffering are part of sharing in Christ’s sufferings and are the mark the true believer. Yet, like Christ’s sufferings, our sufferings are intended to be used by God to bring comfort to others who are suffering as well.

Closing Thoughts:

Remember our opening about being comforted and encouraged by being with someone who shares our same experience with us? That’s what Paul is getting at when he says we share in Jesus’s sufferings. Jesus experienced what it means to suffer. On the cross He cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Ps. 22) You’ve probably heard the phrase, “He gets us.” While that movement has some serious theological errors, the sentiment is real. We all want someone who understands what we are going through. And Christ, ***more than anyone else*** understands suffering. But He doesn’t just “get us.” Rather, He saves us. The greatest act of suffering became the greatest comfort to the world. It is that upside-down kingdom ethic. Our salvation through His loss. Our testimony from His tragedy. At the world’s darkest hour, suffering was overcome forever-through His suffering. By His suffering comes our salvation and His victory in the resurrection. And Christ’s victory assures the Corinthians, Paul, and us that no matter what afflictions we face, our deliverance is assured. And that is what brings us unwavering comfort which we are meant to share with others in their suffering.

**🡪We are comforted in Christ in order to comfort others**

Homework:

* Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-3:18 and work on the study guide (To be sent out soon) (Also, finish 2 Corinthians Overview and Chapter 1:1-11 study guide)
* Watch the Bible Project on 2 Corinthians.
* Answer the discussion question (introduction) to be posted this month.
* Next Study: Tuesday, October 28

Sources Used:

ESV Study Bible

Logos

[Barnett, Paul.](https://www.amazon.com/Epistle-Corinthians-International-Commentary-Testament/dp/0802823009/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2T23GZ0F2UU8C&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9._qPPy-jMHR80wNT3AIoWpzC0-Qq7gbQNykZS1Xie2m8kPImrwqx3hLvci0sBUbrp1t-bmAbAO9vQVAtCazeQ3gKq0TW4WLFIA3DIhDNVaV4._QPAlQJScb273jNxknyOqGmPVtjCPDUuUZaFry08EwE&dib_tag=se&keywords=2+corinthians+barnett&qid=1749793477&sprefix=2+corinthians+barnett%2Caps%2C125&sr=8-1) *[The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](https://www.amazon.com/Epistle-Corinthians-International-Commentary-Testament/dp/0802823009/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2T23GZ0F2UU8C&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9._qPPy-jMHR80wNT3AIoWpzC0-Qq7gbQNykZS1Xie2m8kPImrwqx3hLvci0sBUbrp1t-bmAbAO9vQVAtCazeQ3gKq0TW4WLFIA3DIhDNVaV4._QPAlQJScb273jNxknyOqGmPVtjCPDUuUZaFry08EwE&dib_tag=se&keywords=2+corinthians+barnett&qid=1749793477&sprefix=2+corinthians+barnett%2Caps%2C125&sr=8-1)*[. The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997.](https://www.amazon.com/Epistle-Corinthians-International-Commentary-Testament/dp/0802823009/ref=sr_1_1?crid=2T23GZ0F2UU8C&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9._qPPy-jMHR80wNT3AIoWpzC0-Qq7gbQNykZS1Xie2m8kPImrwqx3hLvci0sBUbrp1t-bmAbAO9vQVAtCazeQ3gKq0TW4WLFIA3DIhDNVaV4._QPAlQJScb273jNxknyOqGmPVtjCPDUuUZaFry08EwE&dib_tag=se&keywords=2+corinthians+barnett&qid=1749793477&sprefix=2+corinthians+barnett%2Caps%2C125&sr=8-1)

[Garland, David E. *2 Corinthians*. Vol. 29. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.](https://www.amazon.com/Corinthians-Exegetical-Theological-Exposition-Commentary/dp/0805401296/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3QR0348D7WCVQ&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.MzL-yDb-xB7upEyV9GQIKR-0fyXtNtB2a4B7oPs1Sb3_Xr52QaD5U0gD3zN6iADUlD7ry-iBUrs3yBKOWBzgBA.Eq8V0FdZRZI_rVOAKPzbmET3Kdmy-6M_QQsW4tAS9AA&dib_tag=se&keywords=2+corinthians+garland&qid=1749793444&sprefix=2+corinthians+garland%2Caps%2C132&sr=8-1)