

Introduction

The apostle Paul founded the church at Corinth during his second missionary journey and ministered there for eighteen months. Both 1 and 2 Corinthians are letters he wrote back to the church. The first is primarily corrective, as the apostle addressed a lack of purity within the church and the need to live as new creatures in Christ. In 2 Corinthians, Paul expressed joy at the repentance of the Corinthian believers, yet he sought to defend his apostleship and confront the false apostles who were attempting to infiltrate the church. Both letters are deeply doctrinal yet practical, showing how godly living stems from godly beliefs.

This year we are memorizing Ephesians 2. This week's verse is Ephesians 2:13:
"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of

Day One

Read 1 Corinthians 1–3; *Living as Saints*

1. In verse 1 Corinthians 1:2, how did Paul refer to the Corinthians? From 2 Corinthians 5:14–21, Ephesians 1:1, and Revelation 14:12, list some of the qualities that characterized these people.
 - a. From 1 Corinthians 3:1–4 and 5:1–2, were the Corinthian believers living in a way which was consistent with their new identity? Why or why not?
2. According to 1:10–17, 3:3–4, 4:5, and 5:1–2, what specific concerns did Paul have about the Corinthian church?
 - a. From these texts and 1 Corinthians 6:18–20, what solutions did Paul encourage?
 - b. How does Philippians 2:1–5, deepen your understanding of Paul's exhortation?
3. According to 1 Corinthians 2:2, what was the main focus of Paul's message to the Corinthians?
4. From 1:26–31, in what are believers *not* to boast, and in what are believers *to* boast?
 - a. In your own life, in what things do you boast or take pride? What needs to change to better reflect Christ?

Day Two

Read 1 Corinthians 10, 12–13; *Serving in the Church*

1. From 1 Corinthians 10:1–12, what negative example did Paul use to help the church guard against temptation and pride?

2. How does 1 Corinthians 10:13 offer encouragement in the struggle against sin? How can God's promise and grace strengthen your resolve this week as you fight temptation and sin?

3. According to 10:31, what is the ultimate purpose of mankind and the goal of every individual believer?
 - a. How can you bring glory to God in the ordinary and routine responsibilities of your life? Be specific.

4. In 1 Corinthians 12:4–7, what is the source and purpose of spiritual gifts?

5. From 12:12–26, what illustration did Paul use to describe the work of individuals within the church? How does this encourage you practically?
 - a. How do 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 and Romans 12:3–13 deepen your understanding of service in the church?

6. Read 1 Corinthians 13 with John 13:1–15 and 1 Peter 2:21–25. How does Jesus model this kind of love for believers? How can this example motivate your own love for God and service to His people?

Day Three

Read 1 Corinthians 15; *Hoping in the Resurrection*

1. In 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, what three fundamental Christian beliefs did Paul affirm?
 - a. Why do you think Paul emphasized that these truths were “according to the Scriptures?”
 - b. Why do you think Paul described this doctrine of the resurrection as being of “first importance”? (If possible, use Scripture to support your answer.)

2. Read 1 Corinthians 15 with Genesis 3:15, 2 Samuel 7:16, Psalm 89:1–4, Isaiah 53, Luke 24:25–27, Acts 2:25–31 and 26:22–23. Should the death and resurrection of Jesus have been a surprise to those familiar with the Old Testament?

3. According to 1 Corinthians 15:13–19, what would be the consequences if Christ had never risen from the dead?

4. From Romans 5:12–17, how did God finally and completely remove the sting of death?

- a. **Dig Deeper:** Remembering God's plan of redemption, how does Christ's resurrection relate to the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12), and the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7)?

5. How does meditating on the truths of 1 Corinthians 15: 56–58 impact your own efforts and joy as you serve the Lord?

Day Four

Read 2 Corinthians 3; **Rejoicing in the New Covenant**

NOTE: *The context of this passage is that the Judaizers (like Paul before his conversion) were falsely claiming that adherence to the Mosaic Law (the Old Covenant) could accomplish salvation. Paul argued that the Law was never meant to provide forgiveness of sin but to expose the sinfulness of man and his need for a Savior to fully and finally atone for sin. The New Covenant was made through Jesus' death and resurrection and is fundamentally a new relationship between God and man, a covenant of salvation by faith and grace.*

1. From 2 Corinthians 3:4–4:6, identify two or three elements of the new covenant that are encouraging to you.

2. In verses 6–18, what contrasts between the old and new covenants did Paul give?

<u>The Law</u>	<u>The Spirit</u>
a. verse 6	b. verses 6–8
c. verses 7–13	d. verses 14–18

3. From Hebrews 8:6–13; 9:11–12; and 10:1–4, list some characteristics of the new covenant.

4. How does your understanding of the new covenant encourage you to be renewed to put on the new self (Ephesians 4:22–24)?

Day Five

Read 2 Corinthians 5 and 12; **Enduring Until the End**

1. In 2 Corinthians 5:1 and 5–8, what was Paul's focus that enabled him to live courageously on earth?
 - a. According to verse 9, what should be the goal for a believer, and what does that mean? Try to find verses in Scripture to support your answer.

2. According to 5:17 and 20, what two titles are given to believers?
 - a. What are the implications of those titles in your life? How can it motivate you as you seek to bring glory to God and bear witness to His grace?

3. From 2 Corinthians 5:18–21, summarize briefly the work that God gave to believers.
 - a. What does that look like practically in your own life? How do you want to grow in this area?

4. As you think back on Paul's concern and care for the Corinthian church and God's purpose and providence in Christ's death and resurrection, share with your group one or two key principles or truths you've learned through this week's study.

Paul's Third Missionary Journey
Living in the Hope of the Resurrection

- I. 1 Corinthians—Christ the Wisdom of God to Believers
II. 2 Corinthians—Christ the Encouragement of God to Believers