

Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

God is in Control and Human Plans Change

 “Paul knew the importance of holiness and sincerity in word and action, especially in a situation as in Corinth, where constructive criticism was necessary. So, Paul did not come with impressive human knowledge (worldly wisdom). God wants us to be real and transparent in all of our relationships. If we aren't, we may end up lowering ourselves to spreading rumors, gossiping, and second-guessing.

“Paul had recently made a brief, unscheduled visit to Corinth that was very painful for him and the church (see 2:1). After that visit, he told the church when he would return. But Paul changed his original travel plans. Instead of sailing from Ephesus to Corinth before going to Macedonia, he traveled from Ephesus directly to Macedonia, where he wrote a letter to the Corinthians that caused him much anguish and then much sorrow (7:8-9). He had made his original plans thinking that the church would have solved its problems. When the time came for Paul's scheduled trip to Corinth, however, the crisis had not been fully resolved (although progress was being made in some areas; 7:11-16). So, he wrote a letter instead (2:3-4; 7:8) because another visit may have only made matters worse. Thus, Paul stayed away from Corinth because he was concerned over the church's unity, not because he was fickle.

“Paul's change of plans caused some of his accusers to say that he couldn't be trusted, hoping to undermine his authority. Paul said that he was not the type of person to say “yes” when he means “no” [1:17]. Paul explained that it was not indecision but a concern for their feelings that forced him to change his plans. The reason for his trip — to bring joy (1:24) — could not be accomplished with the present crisis. Paul didn't want to visit them only to rebuke them severely (1:23). Just as the Corinthians could trust God to keep His promises, they could trust Paul as God's representative to keep his. He would visit them, but at a better time.” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, The Life Application® Study Bible (NIV), ISBN: 9780842328753, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 2094]

12^a 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. **12^b** We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

Q1. When Paul pronounced that “our conscience testifies”, do you think that he sought God through prayer and searched his knowledge of Scripture, his heart, conscience, and soul to ensure that he and his ministry team were conducting themselves above reproach and (implied) communicating the Gospel message accurately and effectively?

Yes? No? This is the Apostle Paul; why is he so concerned about behavior?

Q2. When Paul states that “Our conscience testifies”, from Whom did Paul receive validation?

H ____ Y S ____ T.

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Q3. [From verse 12] To what did Paul's "conscience [testify]"?

 Satan does his best to snatch-away the Gospel message from potential Believers, as well as to poke holes in the heretofore resolute faith of mature saints. After Paul left a city in which he founded a church, Judaizers would ooze into the new church and through their charisma and eloquent words do their best to denigrate Paul and the truth he preached. However, unlike Paul, the Judaizers ingratiated themselves within the church, so that the parishioners believed they were doing them a favor by paying them for preaching and teaching them a perverted doctrine.

2 Corinthians 11:7-15 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

[In a later StudySheet/Lesson, we will study 2 Corinthians 11:7-12. The passage is reproduced below to provide context on Paul's continual battle with the Judaizers.]

⁷ I preached God's Good News to you without pay. I made myself unimportant to make you important. Do you think that was wrong? ⁸ I accepted pay from other churches. I took their money so that I could serve you. ⁹ If I needed something when I was with you, I did not trouble any of you. The brothers who came from Macedonia gave me all that I needed. I did not allow myself to depend on you in any way. And I will never depend on you. ¹⁰ No one in Southern Greece will stop me from bragging about that. I say this with the truth of Christ in me. ¹¹ And why do I not depend on you? Do you think it is because I do not love you? No. God knows that I love you.

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing now. I will continue because I want to stop those people from having a reason to brag. They would like to say that the work they brag about is the same as ours. ¹³ Such men are not true apostles. They are workers who lie. And they change themselves to look like apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ This does not surprise us. Even Satan changes himself to look like an angel of light. ¹⁵ So it does not surprise us if Satan's servants also make themselves look like servants who work for what is right. But in the end, they will be punished for the things they do.

Day 2

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^{12b} We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

Q4. What is "worldly wisdom"? What is "God's grace"? In conclusion, why is "God's grace" more important than "worldly wisdom"?

Worldly wisdom?

God's grace?

Conclusion?

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Matthew 16:15-17 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[God Himself helps a person to believe, to believe the Gospel.]

¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”

¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Romans 10:17 [NIV-1984]

[The Word of Christ is God. See also John 1:1-3^a, 14, 17 (↓).]

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

John 1:1-3^a, 14, 17 [NIV-1984]

[The Word of Christ is God. Notice the progression that defines the Word (v 1) → Grace and Truth (v 14) → Jesus Christ (v 17).]

¹ In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ^{3a} Through him all things were made . . .

¹⁴ The *Word* became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of *grace and truth*. . . .

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; *grace and truth* came through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-9 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

⁸ I mean that you have been saved by grace because you believe. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God. ⁹ You cannot brag that you are saved by the work you have done.

Q5. I thought “boasting” was bad. Why is Paul’s “boasting” allowed? (Hint: see Psalm 34:2 ↓)

Matthew 6:3 [NIV-1984]

³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Ephesians 2:9-10 [NIV-1984]

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God — ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Judges 7:2-7, 12, 14 [NIV-1984]

[This is an excerpt from such a marvelous story of God's sovereignty and provision for those He loves and cares, which was performed in such a miraculous way that the Israelites were forced to recognize God's deliverance! No Israelite could refuse to believe God's provision on their behalf.]

² The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men for me to deliver Midian [the armies of the Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern peoples] into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, ³ announce now to the people, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead!'"

So, twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

⁴ But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, 'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if I say, 'This one shall

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not go with you,' he shall not go."

⁵ So Gideon took the men down to the water.

There the LORD told him, "Separate those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog from those who kneel down to drink." ⁶ Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

⁷ The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place." . . .

¹² The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the other eastern peoples had settled in the valley, thick as locusts. Their camels could no more be counted than the sand on the seashore. . . .

¹⁴ [Two Midianite soldiers were whispering and one] responded, "This can be nothing other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and the whole camp into his hands."

1 Samuel 2:3 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

Do not go on boasting so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the Lord is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed.

Psalm 5:5 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

The boastful will not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do injustice.

James 3:13-16 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

Do you want to be counted wise, to build a reputation for wisdom? Here's what you do: Live well, live wisely, live humbly. It's the way you live, not the way you talk, that counts. Mean-spirited ambition isn't wisdom. Boasting that you are wise isn't wisdom. Twisting the truth to make yourselves sound wise isn't wisdom. It's the furthest thing from wisdom — it's animal cunning, devilish plotting. Whenever you're trying to look better than others or get the better of others, things fall apart and everyone ends up at the others' throats.

James 4:16 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Psalm 34:2 [New American Standard Bible (NASB)]

[This verse implies the kind of boasting that is acceptable to the LORD.]

My soul will make its boast in the Lord; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

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Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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.

Q6. Why might the Corinthians want to “boast” of Paul?

Q7. What is “the day of the Lord Jesus”?

Acts 10:42-43 [NIV-2011]

[The Holy Spirit guided the Apostle Simon Peter to Caesarea and specifically to the House of Cornelius. Cornelius was a Gentile and a Roman Centurian of the Italian Regiment. Peter then testified to those assembled in the House by saying, in part:]

⁴² He [Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Revelation 20:11-15 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. Earth and sky ran away from him and disappeared. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. The dead were judged by what they had done, which was written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades [Hades: where the dead are] gave up the dead who were in them. Each person was judged by what he had done.

¹⁴ And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death.

¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

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Revelation 3:5 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

He who wins the victory will be dressed in white clothes like them. I will not take away his name from the book of life. I will say that he belongs to me before my Father and before his angels.

Psalm 69:28 [NIV-1984]

[The name "book of life" is not something new that was introduced in the New Testament. It was a known phrase in Old Testament history!]

May they be blotted out of the book of life and not be listed with the righteous.

Daniel 12:1-2 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

That's when Michael, the great angel-prince, champion of your people, will step in. It will be a time of trouble, the worst trouble the world has ever seen. But your people will be saved from the trouble, every last one found written in the Book. Many who have been long dead and buried will wake up, some to eternal life, others to eternal shame.

1 Corinthians 16:5-9 [NIV-1984]

[In Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians he outlined this travel itinerary:]

⁵ After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you — for I will be going through Macedonia. ⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you awhile, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷ I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

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 [also known as Israel, with Jerusalem as its principal city].

 Paul's travel itinerary changed. Apparently, some Corinthians criticized Paul for failing to follow-through with the 'visit he promised' in 1st Corinthians 16:5-9 (↑). So, through these verses in this first chapter and an additional four verses in chapter two Paul addresses this criticism.

Q8. To Who or what is Paul subject? Who or what might change his travel plans?

Paul is subject to Who/what?

Who/what might change his plans?

Acts 16:6-8 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

[From the Acts of the Apostles (the Book of Acts)]

⁶⁻⁸ They [Paul and his companions] went to Phrygia, and then on through the region of Galatia. Their plan was to turn west into Asia province, but the Holy Spirit blocked that route. So, they went to Mysia and tried to go north to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them go there either. Proceeding on through Mysia, they went down to the seaport Troas.

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4



The map illustrates Corinth in relation to Macedonia.

Judea is about 825 Miles (1,325 km) east-southeast from Corinth.

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Q9. Should we, who believe, plan ahead? Or should we defer all of our personal planning to the Holy Spirit? (Did Paul wait or did he take the first step?)

Plan ahead? Yes? No? Why?

Defer planning to the Holy Spirit? Yes? No? Why?

Q10. What is inferred by Paul's statement: "and then to have you send me on my way to Judea"?

 “[Paul] did not intend merely to go from Corinth to Judaea. He expected the Corinthians to further his intentions, to help him on, to escort him solemnly to the ship in which he was to sail, perhaps to accompany him. . .” [©about 1880, Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/1-16.htm]

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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"?

Q11. What characteristics might determine "plans [made] in a worldly manner"?

 [Paul seems to be saying,] " 'Am I weak and worldly in my purpose, changing my plans, and saying 'Yes' and 'No' in almost the same breath?' . . .

"It is obvious that the [quote] on which he dwells had been [denigrated] by others. Some teacher of the party of the circumcision [the Judaizers] had, apparently, quoted the rule of [Jesus'] Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:37 ↓) . . . and had asked, with a sneer, when the First Epistle [Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians] came and showed that the original plan had been abandoned, whether this was the way in which St. Paul acted on it? The passage has accordingly the interest of being indirectly a reference to our Lord's teaching, showing, like Acts 20:35 (↓), that 'the words of the Lord Jesus' were habitually cited as rules of life." [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/1-17.htm]

Matthew 5:33-37 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

[As part of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught:]

³³ "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' ³⁴ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Acts 20:35 [NIV-1984]

³⁵ In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

Q12. [Personal] Are your yes's "yes" and your no's "no"?

Yes? } Why?
No?

If you answered "no": ① Do you want to change?

② How might you change?

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

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."

Q13. (Verse 19) To what might Paul refer when he writes, "Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me"? Is Paul referencing the man Jesus? Or an all-encompassing reference to the man, His divinity, His resurrection, His teachings, His miracles, His service, and all He represents? Or something else?

The man Jesus? An all-encompassing reference? Other?

Q14. (Verse 19) If Paul vacillated between "yes" and "no" when teaching about Christ Jesus, might his preaching be considered fickle, changeable?

Yes? No? Thoughts?

 The commentator Albert Barnes wrote this explanation about the phrase ***in him it has always been "Yes"***:

"[It w]as not one thing at one time, and another at another [time].

"He [Jesus] is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. All that he says is true; all the promises that he makes are firm; all his declarations are faithful. Paul may refer to the fact that the Lord Jesus when on earth was eminently characterized by truth. Nothing was more striking than his veracity. He called himself 'the truth,' as being eminently true in all his declarations. 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life;' John 14:6; compare Revelation 3:7. And thus [in] Revelation 3:14 (Ψ) he is called 'the faithful and true witness.' In all his life he was eminently distinguished for that. His declarations were simple truth; his narratives were simple, unvarnished, uncolored, unexaggerated statements of what actually occurred. He never disguised the truth; never prevaricated; never had any mental reservation; never deceived; never used any word, or threw in any circumstance, that was suited to lead the mind astray. He himself said that this was the great object which he had in view in coming into the world. 'For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth' John 18:37.

"As Jesus Christ was thus distinguished for simple truth, Paul felt that he was under sacred obligations to imitate him, and always to evince the same inviolable fidelity. The most deeply felt obligation on earth is that which the Christian feels to imitate the Redeemer." [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/1-19.htm]

John 14:6 [NIV-1984]

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Revelation 3:7 [NIV-1984]

"To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open."

Revelation 3:14 [NIV-1984]

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

John 18:37 [NIV-1984]

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

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.

Q15. What does Paul mean in the phrase "through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God"?

Who/what is the "Amen"?

What truth did Paul speak (from phrase "spoken by us")?

How might Paul's words be "to the glory of God"?

 a•men ('er'men, 'a'men)

1. it is so; so be it (used after a prayer, creed, or other formal statement to express solemn ratification or agreement).
2. an utterance of the interjection "amen."
3. an expression of concurrence or assent: The committee gave its amen to the proposal.

[Etymology: before 1000; Middle English, Old English < Late Latin < Greek < Hebrew āmēn]

[Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/Amen>]

Revelation 3:14 [NIV-1984]

[This Revelation passage also refers to the resurrected/ascended Christ Jesus as "the Amen". It is so! Everything culminates in Him!]

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation."

 "Through Him is **the amen**.' He is the Door. The truths which He confirms are so inextricably intertwined with Himself that you cannot get them and put away Him. Christ's relation to Christ's Gospel is not the relation of other teachers to their words. You may accept the words of a Plato, whatever you think of the Plato who spoke the words. But you cannot separate Christ and His teaching in that fashion, and you must have **Him** if you are to get **it**. So, faith in Him, the intellectual acceptance of Him, as the authoritative and infallible Revealer, the bowing down of heart and will to Him as our Commander and our Lord, the absolute trust in Him as the foundation of all our hope and the source of all our blessedness — that is the way to certitude, and there is no other road that we can take." [©1904; Expositions Of Holy Scripture, Alexander MacLaren. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/1-20.htm]

 **the glory of God:** "Paul means to say, that the fulfillment of all the promises which God has made to His people shall result in His glory and praise as a God of condescension [superiority] and veracity [Truth]. The fact that He has made such promises is an act that tends to His own glory — since it was of His mere grace that they were made; and the fulfillment of these promises in and through the church, shall also tend to produce elevated views of His fidelity and goodness." [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/1-20.htm]

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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.

Q16. What three things did God do for Paul, the Corinthian Believers, and we who believe?

①

②

③

Matthew 16:13-17 [NIV-1984]

¹³ When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.

 See also Ephesians 1:13-14 on page 5.

Matthew 28:18-20 [NIV-1984]

[The Great Commission]

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 22:36-40 [NIV-1984]

³⁶ "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Q17. A person might say that “Since God ‘[made] . . . us . . . [to] stand firm in Christ’, I do not need to do anything else”. Is this the correct interpretation of verses 21-22? How do we, who believe, best fulfill the ① Great Commission ↑ and ② Jesus’ guidance ↑ to “love your neighbor as yourself”?)

Interpretation? Yes? No? Why?

How do we best fulfill the Great Commission and Jesus’ guidance?

Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

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.

Q18. Why did Paul write “that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth”?

 In 1 Corinthians 7:1^a (↓), Paul acknowledges the letter the Corinthian Church had written to Paul asking “Questions about their faith. In response, Paul wrote the [letter, which is now known as] 1st Corinthians.

“[Unfortunately, the Corinthian] Church did not follow his instructions. Paul had planned to visit them again, but instead he wrote [the 1st Corinthians] letter that caused sorrow [as Paul acknowledged in 2nd Corinthians 7:8-10 ↓] to give them another chance to change their ways. He didn’t want to visit and repeat the same advice for the same problems. He wrote the emotional letter to encourage them to follow the advice that he had already given in previous letters and visits.” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, The Life Application® Study Bible (NIV), ISBN: 9780842328753, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 2094]

1 Corinthians 7:1^a [NIV-1984]

Now for the matters you wrote about:

2 Corinthians 7:8-10 [NIV-1984]

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it — I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while — ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

 We can empathize with the Corinthians. They were new Believers; they had established friendships and ‘best friend forever’ relationships with family members and friends; they had established business arrangements. Suddenly, “I am a new Believer!” And then the realization hits as the Holy Spirit begins to work in the heart of the new Believer. “Is my behavior honoring to Christ?” The new Believer had to examine their behavior and then determine if changes needed to be made. And as part of the faith journey the new Believer had to analyze current relationships to answer the question, “Are my relationships with loved ones and friends honoring or sinful? Did they lead me to sin? Oh, my!”

After Paul left Corinth to continue his missionary journey, the new Believers probably felt reduced pressure to change. And Judaizers came in and tweaked Paul’s message a bit further, thereby continuing to reduce the pressure to follow the Holy Spirit in their journey to overcome sin in their lives. So, Paul had little choice but to confront the continuing sin in the lives of the Corinthian parishioners through his letters.

Q19. How do you describe an “accountability partner”?

Q20. Is Paul acting as an accountability partner toward the Corinthians?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

 The following verses speak to a Believer holding-up, encouraging, and even confronting another. God does not want us to walk alone in this world. He knows that we need the support of others to perform His work.

Mark 6:7-13 [NIV-1984]

⁷ Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

Calling the Twelve to him, he sent them out two by two [teams of two] and gave them authority over evil spirits.

⁸ These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra tunic. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Proverbs 27:17 [NIV-1984]

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Galatians 6:1-2 [NIV-1984]

¹ Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

James 5:16 [NIV-1984]

Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Lesson 2: 2 Corinthians 1:12-24 & 2:1-4

Matthew 18:15-17 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 [NIV-1984]

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰ If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

^{2:1} So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you.
² For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved?

Q21. It is a human reaction: do you want to be near a person, who has caused you sorrow, sadness, and hurt?

Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

³ I wrote as I did so that, when I came, I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. ⁴ For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

Q22. What was Paul's ultimate objective with his letters?

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