

Day 1

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

The Truth Plainly Communicated

¹Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

Q1. ***We have this ministry***: how would you describe "***this ministry***"? (Hints, e.g.: Source of dependence, trust, and wisdom? Itinerant? Easy travel? Identifying people willing to hear the Gospel? Overcoming adversities? Funding for day-to-day living expenses? Others?)

Q2. To Whom does Paul consider the source of "***this ministry***"? (Perhaps, answered in the previous question)

Q3. **¹Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.**

While the verse itself is brief, is there even one lesson or principle for us implied in Paul's words? (Circle the lesson or principle; and explain.)

 Paul gives the glory for "***this ministry***" to God. Paul expresses an overriding principle in his 1st letter to the Thessalonians (↓). The principle is prayer for everything in all circumstances. In other words, cover everything in thanksgiving and supplication — Paul devotes his work to God, and gives God all the praise. Paul writes "***we do not lose heart***". Paul through his prayers, his obedience, and his servant's attitude obtains strength, wisdom, and courage from God through the Holy Spirit. We should remember Paul's words in the bad times as well as the good!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV-1984]

¹⁶Be joyful always; ¹⁷pray continually; ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Lesson 5: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Q4. What group (encouraged by Satan) might Paul be attempting to thwart in his choice of contrasting character traits?

(See question 4 in the previous lesson/StudySheet: <https://godislife.org/20252Cor/2Cor-03-01-18.pdf>)

J U — A — — — R S

Q5. What words/phrases from verse 2 emphasize the group's (the 'group' referenced in Q4 ↑) philosophies as they preach and teach?

Q6. What words/phrases from verse 2 emphasize Paul's philosophies as he preaches?

James 3:1 [NIV-1984]

[The Book of James was written by Jesus' half-brother, whose true father was Joseph the carpenter with Mary his mother. Note: as I develop these StudySheets/Lessons, this particular verse is always on my mind. I attempt to make these StudySheets as accurate as humanly possible — by the grace of God and the overtime work of the Holy Spirit.]

Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Q7. ***We commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God***: what exactly is Paul asking? How could this phrase be restated in everyday English?

 ***We commend ourselves to every man's conscience***: "That is, so speaking the truth that every man's conscience shall approve it "as" true; every man shall see it to be true, and to be in accordance with what he knows to be right. Conscience is that faculty of the mind which distinguishes between right and wrong, and which prompts us to choose the former and avoid the latter; . . . Romans 2:15 . . ." [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/4-2.htm]

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Romans 2:14-15 [NIV-1984]

¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

Day 2

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³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.
⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Q8. ***Our gospel is veiled:*** How would you describe “veiled”?

Q9. ***The god of this age:*** Who is this “god”?

Q10. According to verse 4, what has the “god of this age” done?

Q11. Apologetics: I thought God is love and wants what is best for us. My child, my parent, my best friend is an unbeliever. Why has God allowed him/her to be blinded, and perish?

 This is a thorny question that has perplexed scholars for millennia. And this is my poor attempt to answer the question. As you answered Question 11 (↑), did you include ‘free-will’ (or free-choice) in your answer? God is indeed love and He wants what is best for us — and that best is eternal life in Paradise with Him.

When God became man and walked this earth as Jesus, He performed miracles, demonstrated a servant's heart, spoke Truths that harmonized with the Old Testament Scriptures, and encouraged people in His audiences to “Sin no more and follow me.” Yet, at no time did Jesus say, “You have no choice, you must follow me for I am God.”

We are an obstinate people, and even an earthquake under our easy chair will not budge some of us from our comfort, our complacency, and our desire for things to remain the same.

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God prefers that His actions speak for Him: the beauty of a sunrise/sunset, the shimmering of the aurora borealis; the complexity of our eyeballs; “love at first sight” and the coincidence that our paths crossed (“Co-incidence is a God-incidence in disguise.” [thanks to © <https://www.tremain.us/index.html>]); photographs of our universe from the James Webb Space Telescope; the microscopic worlds revealed under the lens of a microscope; the vast variety of creatures on land and in the sea; the uniqueness of each person on this ball we call earth; the cycle between plants that consume carbon dioxide and expel oxygen, and humans that consume oxygen and expel carbon dioxide; and — the list is endless.

God loves, and He desires our love. The best way to demonstrate our love is through obedience. “Obedience to what?” you might ask. Obedience to the principles sprinkled and repeated throughout God’s all-in-one instruction manual, history book, and descriptions of His character — the Holy Bible, which is comprised of the Old and New Testaments.

Our love for our spouse, our children, our ‘best friend forever’ must be demonstrated every day. It is not enough to say “I love you”. Our actions must demonstrate that love; even to our neighbors. As Jesus taught (by repeating Leviticus 19:18 ↓), ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’

1 John 4:8 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Proverbs 3:5-6 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Mark 12:30-31 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus used passages from the Pentateuch (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18) to answer the question from the Jewish religious leaders. By the way, the Pentateuch is comprised of the first five books of what we call the Old Testament.]

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Day 3

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⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

Q12. **For we do not preach ourselves:** Generally speaking, what would be the typical subject-matter if someone “preached ourselves”? (Thoughts? Prideful assertions, selfish inuendo, me-myself-and-I)

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Q13. **For we . . . preach . . . Jesus Christ as Lord:** Generally speaking, what would be the typical subject-matter of someone preaching “Jesus Christ as Lord”?

Q14. As Believers in the saving grace of Christ Jesus, are we superior to nonbelievers? How should we act to nonbelievers, as well as Believers?

Yes? No? Why?

How should we act?

Matthew 20:25-28 [NIV-1984]

²⁵ Jesus called them [His disciples and followers] together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:43 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

But it should not be that way among you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant.

Q15. As Believers in the saving grace of Christ Jesus, are we to serve? Or be served? Do we demonstrate favoritism between the powerful versus the powerless? Wealthy versus poor? Celebrity versus the ‘nobody’?

To serve? Be served? Why?

Favoritism: Yes? No? Why?

James 2:1-9 [NIV-1984]

[This teaching is an excerpt from the letter written by Jesus' half-brother James, whose parents were Joseph the Carpenter and Mary.]

¹ My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³ If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," ⁴ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? ⁶ But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? ⁷ Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸ If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹ But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

Lesson 5: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Q16. *Let light shine out of darkness*: what does "light" (throughout this verse) represent?

Luke 11:33 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Jesus taught:]

"No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.

John 1:1-10 [NIV-1984]

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. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John [the Baptist]. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

Revelation 22:5 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

And night will be no more. They [Believers] will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

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Day 4

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

Treasure in Jars of Clay

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Q17. **Jars of clay:** What does “jars of clay” represent?

 **Jars of clay:** “It is suited well to represent the human body; frail, fragile, and easily reduced again to dust. The purpose of Paul here is, to show that it was by no excellency of his nature that the gospel was originated; it was in virtue of no vigor and strength which he possessed that it was propagated; but that it had been, of design, committed by God to weak, decaying, and crumbling instruments, in order that it might ‘be seen’ that it was by the power of God that such instruments were sustained in the trials to which they were exposed, and in order that it might be manifest to all that it was not originated and diffused by the power of those to whom it was entrusted. The idea is, that they were altogether insufficient of their own strength to accomplish what was accomplished by the gospel. Paul uses a metaphor similar to this in 2 Timothy 2:20.” [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/4-7.htm]

Q18. **This all-surpassing power:** What “power” is Paul referencing?

Q19. **To show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us:** Why is Paul concerned that his audience recognize and understand God is the source of power and Paul is powerless (“power is . . . not from us”)?

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⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

Q20. From where/what does Paul get his strength to persevere?

Q21. Do you turn to the Lord to obtain the strength to persevere?

The Lord: Yes? No? Why?

Q22. [Personal/private; do not share your answer.] Are you feeling crushed, despair, abandoned, and/or on the verge of destruction? If yes, what actions can you take to lessen your burdens? Can you find someone with whom you can confide? (Do not let your pride get in the way of seeking help.)

Feelings: Yes? No? Why?

What actions?

Name of someone with whom I can confide?

When can I confide with this person? Today?

1 Corinthians 10:13 [NIV-1984]

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

Q23. Does 1 Corinthians 10:13 (↑) mean that we should wait for God to take action? Or may He expect us to take the first steps in faith?

Do we wait? Yes? No? Why?

Do we take the 1st steps? Yes? No? Why?

Acts 16:6 [NIV-1984]

[Even the Apostle Paul — as consequential he was to the spread of the Gospel of Christ Jesus — had his personal plans to preach in Asia blocked by God — God closed that door. I can imagine Paul shrugging his shoulders, saying a quick prayer of thanksgiving, and then in obedience trying to ‘open the next door’ — the next ministry opportunity — to see if God will allow him to preach the saving grace of Christ Jesus to this new audience.]

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

Lesson 5: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

Day 5

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^{10a} We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, ^{10b} so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ^{11a} For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, ^{11b} so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ^{12a} So then, death is at work in us, ^{12b} but life is at work in you.

Q24. (Verse 10^a) ***We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus:*** Paul may have been thinking about his own hardships when he wrote these words. What hardships did Paul endure as he preached the Good News of Christ Jesus?

2 Corinthians 11:23-28 [NIV-1984]

²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

John 15:17-20 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus speaking to His disciples (and to us):]

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

¹⁸ If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

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Q25. (Verse 10^b) ***The life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body:*** How might Jesus' life be revealed by Paul? And by us, who believe? (Do you know of any examples of perseverance, courage, and resilience in the face of adversity?)

By Paul?

.....
By us?
.....

Q26. (Verse 10) Believers in Christ Jesus participate in an act (sacrament) that demonstrates this verse. What is the act? And how does the 'act' demonstrate this verse?

B A — T — — M

How?
.....

Q27. While the wording is similar, there are some slight differences.

(Verse 10^b) ***so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.***

(Verse 11^b) ***so that his life [Jesus] may be revealed in our mortal body.*** What are your thoughts on these two phrases? (Could one verse reference our physical bodies and the other our spiritual bodies?)

Notes for Verse 10b?
.....

Notes for Verse 11b?
.....

Conclusion?
.....

Q28. (Verse 12^a) ***death is at work in us:*** Are our physical bodies permanent or temporary? What might Paul mean ?

.....
.....
.....

John 1:1-9 [NIV-1984]

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.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John [the Baptist]. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the

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world.

Matthew 5:14-16 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

¹⁴ "You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore, I have spoken. [Psalm 116:10a KJV]" With that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence.

Q30. (Verse 14) ***the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead:*** Who is the "one"?

Q31. (Verse 14) ***will also raise us with Jesus:*** Do you have the same assurance as Paul in your eternal destination?

Yes? } Why?
No?

✍ ***It is written: "I believed; therefore, I have spoken":*** "This passage is found in Psalm 116:10. When the psalmist uttered the words, he was greatly afflicted; see Psalm 116:3, Psalm 116:6-8. In these circumstances, he prayed to God, and expressed confidence in him, and placed all his reliance on him. In his affliction he spoke to God; he spoke of his confidence in him; he proclaimed his reliance on him; and his having spoken in this manner was the result of his belief, or of his putting confidence in God." [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/4-13.htm]

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Day 6

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¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

Q32. *May cause thanksgiving to overflow*: As you read verse 15, what or who will cause overflowing thanksgiving?

Q33. What is “*the grace*” referenced in this verse?

Q34. What is the name (and/or description) of the activity Paul references “*that is reaching more and more people*”?

Q35. Should we, too, strive to bring “*glory [to] God*”?

Yes? }
No? } Why?

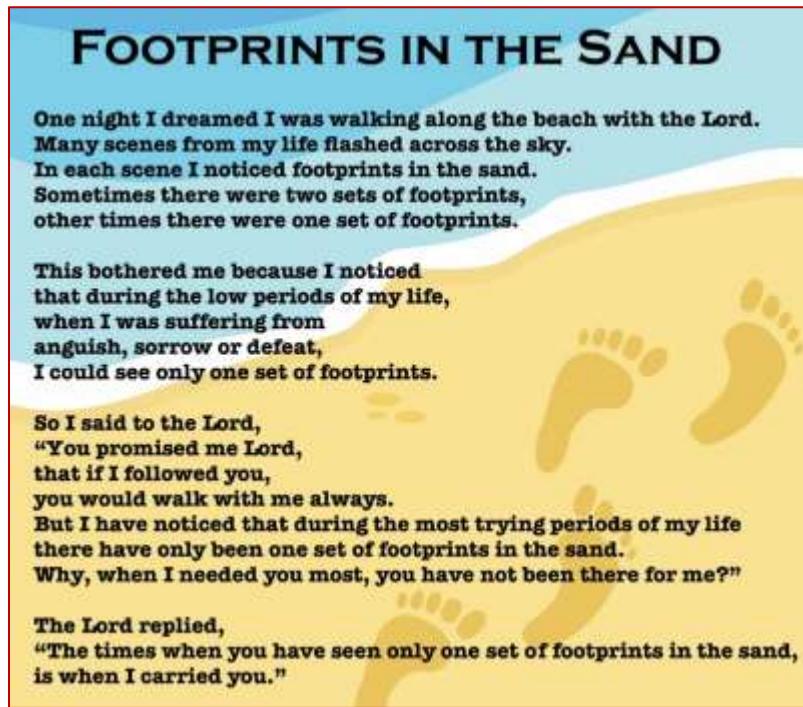
Lesson 5: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

What is Unseen is Eternal

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Q36. (Verse 16) ***inwardly we are being renewed day by day***: This is not boasting, but encouragement to others. How are you being renewed each day?

Q37. (Verse 17) ***For our light and momentary troubles***: How would you explain this phrase to the victim of a painful physical condition, or the mother who cannot feed her newborn, or the person-of-color who is demeaned?



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Lesson 5: 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

James 2:14-14 [NIV-1984]

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Acts 4:32-35 [NIV-1984]

[The early Church of Christ Jesus:]

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Q38. (Verse 17) *an eternal glory that far outweighs them all*: How do you explain this phrase?

✍ *an eternal glory*: “(δόξης doxēs). The Hebrew word כָּבוֹד kabowd denotes weight as well as glory. And perhaps Paul had that use of the word in his eye in this strong expression. It refers here to the splendor, magnificence, honor, and happiness of the eternal world. In this exceedingly interesting passage, which is worthy of the deepest study of Christians, Paul has set in most beautiful and emphatic contrast the trials of this life and the glories of heaven. It may be profitable to contemplate at a single glance the view which he had of them, that they may be brought distinctly before the mind.” [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/4-17.htm]

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