


Day 1


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


Paul Describes the Woes He Suffered for The Gospel

^{16a} I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. ^{16b} But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.

Q1. (Verse 16^a) Has someone accused Paul of being a fool?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

 ***I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool . . . as you would a fool:*** “The stinging word [‘fool’] is repeated from 2Corinthians 11:1. He protests against the justice of the taunt. He pleads that, even if they think him “insane” (this, rather than mere foolishness, is probably the meaning of the word), they will give him the attention which, even in that case, most men would give — which they, at least, were giving to men to whom that term might far more justly be applied.” [©about 1880, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-16.htm]

 Sometimes a different Biblical version will provide additional understanding to a specific passage or verse:

2 Corinthians 11:16 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

^{16a} I tell you again: No one should think that I am a fool. ^{16b} But if you think that I am a fool, then accept me as you would accept a fool. Then I can brag a little, too.

Q2. (Verse 16^b) Is Paul in a difficult situation? Why? (Hints: can he meet his accusers face-to-face? Does Paul know the precise accusations or the extent of the accusations? Is a letter as effective as a face-to-face meeting? Is he able to address each accusation as it is expressed, or must he anticipate a broad-range of accusations and then, hopefully, dismantle the actual or imagined claims one-by-one? Thoughts?)

Is it a difficult situation? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Can he meet his accusers face-to-face? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Does Paul know the precise accusations? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Is a letter as effective as a face-to-face meeting? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Is Paul able to address each accusation or must he imagine/anticipate? Why did you circle that answer?

Additional thoughts?

Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

- Q3. (Verse 16^b) Some Corinthians believed the Judaizers' accusations and think that Paul is a fool or insane or, perhaps, demon-possessed. Paul then states — "Okay, then. Let me do a little boasting". The Judaizers had in all probability boasted about their qualifications, their credentials, their experiences. How might the Judaizers have viewed Paul's "boasting" comment? (Hints: "What can Paul possibly boast about?" "How can Paul's truths outshine the ~~lies~~ experiences we boasted about?" "Uh, oh; we're caught"? "We must double-down"? "We must accuse Paul of exaggeration"? Other thoughts?)
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¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!

- Q4. (Verse 19) From Paul's word choices do you infer an anger or righteous indignation?
Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?
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- Q5. (Verse 19) If you were a Corinthian, especially one who had embraced the Judaizers' words, how might you react to Paul's words?
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Proverbs 1:7 [NIV-1984]

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 9-10, 12-14 [NIV-1984]

[In Paul's 1st Letter to the Corinthians, he shared the source of his wisdom:]


⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. . . .

⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" — ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. . . .

¹² We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. ¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. ¹⁴ The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.


Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Day 2

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

²⁰In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face.

²¹To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

 Sometimes a different Biblical version will provide additional understanding to a specific passage or verse:

2 Corinthians 11:20-21 [New King James Version (NKJV)]


²⁰ For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. ²¹ To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold — I speak foolishly — I am bold also.

Q6. *Enslaves you*: One of the seven broad meanings for ‘freedom’ is “[The condition of not being a slave](#)”. What are some conditions of a slave? (An example is provided; other thoughts: choice: choose to love, choose whom to love, choose when to eat, choose what to eat, choose where to live and work, choose to hope, etc.)

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| Must work precisely as taskmaster commands | | |
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Deuteronomy 24:14-15 [NIV-1984]

¹⁴Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. ¹⁵Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it. Otherwise, he may cry to the Lord against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

 While the Bible does not explicitly prohibit slavery, it does repeat Jesus’ answer to a question, ‘What is the greatest commandment’. Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” (Mark 12:30-31, see also Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 5:43-48; Matthew 19:19; Matthew 22:36-40; Luke 10:27).

If we, who believe, truly believe in the words of Christ Jesus, then slavery and all that slavery implies must be abhorrent to us. How do we ‘love our neighbor’? How do we demonstrate the love of Christ Jesus to our neighbor?

A true believer will not play with words that equivocate (double-talk, weasel, waffle) such as ‘my neighbors are only those who live on each side of my home, and look like me’. No, a true believer will say that everyone who the Lord places before me is my neighbor, whether the person is a fellow Believer or a nonbeliever; whether the person is black, white, or shades in between; whether the person loves one of their gender or the opposite gender; whether the person is happy or sorrowful; whether the person is male, female, or transitioning; whether the person is wealthily dressed or shabbily poor; whether the person is perfumed or smelly. Jesus did not make distinctions, and neither should we! As Jesus looked at a person’s heart, we too should do our best to truly look at a person (the person’s heart) and not just the person’s appearance (a first glance, or skin, dress, hair color, circumstance). We should remember this old adage: “There, but by the grace of God, go I.” (John Bradford’s presumed paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 15:10). Kindness is free; it should be freely given, generously given.

To you the Bible student: Who do you say is your neighbor? Do you judge (discern + consequence)? Do you continually pray, trust, and give time for the Holy Spirit to perform His miracles?

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Q7. **Exploits you:** Has anyone ever exploited or taken advantage of you? If so, how?

James 5:1-6 [NIV-1984]

¹ Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you. ² Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes. ³ Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.


⁴ Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. ⁵ You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter. ⁶ You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

Q8. **Pushes himself forward** [or **exalts himself** (NKJV), or **puts on airs** (NIV-2011), or **think they are better than you** (ICB)]: Has anyone ever exalted him- or her-self over you? If so, how? (Examples: my strategy is better than yours; my ideas are better; my answers are more thorough; I'm stronger; I'm prettier; I'm more technically inclined; I'm better . . .)

Proverbs 16:18 [NIV-1984]

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

Q9. (Personal) **Slaps you in the face:** Has anyone ever hit or slapped you? If so, how did it make you feel? (The answer to this question may be too personal for some to share; please share only if you feel comfortable.)

 The commentators Charles Ellicott and Albert Barnes wrote these words many years ago as they each pondered the meanings of verse 20:

Anyone who enslaves you: "Every word in the sentence clearly points to something that Titus had told him of the action of these rival teachers. They reproduced, in their worst form, the vices of the [Pharisees] of Palestine (Matthew 23:4 (↓); [Mark 12:40 (↓)]; Matthew 23:25 ↓). They enslaved the consciences of men (the same word is used of the same class of men in Galatians 2:4 ↓) by pressing on them an iron code of rules which left no room for the free play of conscience and of reason in those over whom they claimed to act as directors.

Or exploits you: "The word again reminds us of our Lord's denunciation of the teachers who "devoured widows' houses" ([Mark 12:40 (↓)])." [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-20.htm]

Or takes advantage of you: "If he takes and seizes . . . your possessions. If he comes and takes what he pleases and bears it away as his own." [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-20.htm]

Or slaps you in the face: "This last form of outrage was, as St. Paul was soon to experience (Acts 23:2 ↓), [familiar] to Jewish priests and scribes, as the most effective way of silencing an opponent. We have an earlier instance of its application in the action of Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah (1 Kings 22:24). That it had found its way into the Christian Church in the apostolic time is seen in St. Paul's rule that a bishop should be no "striker" (1 Timothy

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3:3 (↓); Titus 1:7 (↓). It is obvious that he had heard of an instance in which this had actually been done at Corinth, and he taunts them with the tameness of their submission. Did he forget, or had he not as yet heard the law of Matthew 5:39 (↓); or was he, knowing it, for a time unmindful of it, in this rush of emotion which he himself feels to be simply human, and therefore not inspired?" [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-20.htm]

Matthew 23:2-4 [NIV-1984]

² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

Mark 12:38-40 [NIV-1984]

³⁸ As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted in the marketplaces, ³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁰ They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Matthew 23:25 [NIV-1984]

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.

Galatians 2:4 [NIV-1984]

This matter arose because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves.

Acts 23:1-2 [NIV-1984]

¹ Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

² At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

1 Timothy 3:2-3 [NIV-1984]

² Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³ not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.

Titus 1:7 [NIV-1984]

Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless — not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain.

Matthew 5:39 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus instructed:]

But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

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Q10. (Verse 21) *To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that:* Paul's comment is saturated with irony/sarcasm. Does it seem possible that the Judaizers accused Paul of not being bold and forceful because he did not use intimidation tactics (verse 20) against the Corinthians? (Hints: Did the Pharisees intimidate or show kindness to their flock – see above verses? Who better exemplifies the character of Christ Jesus?)


Intimidation tactics? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Did the Pharisees intimidate or show kindness to members of their church/synagogue?

Who better exemplifies the character of Christ Jesus? Paul and his followers? Or the Judaizers? Thoughts?

What do intimidation tactics demonstrate? Strength? Or bullying? Or cowardice? Or . . .?

Day 3

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

²² What anyone else dares to boast about — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.


Q11. To a Jew what is the significance of saying, “I am a descendant of Abraham.”?

Genesis 15:5-6 [NIV-1984]

[God was with Abraham:]

⁵ He [God] took him [Abraham] outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

⁶ [Abraham] believed the Lord, and [the Lord] credited it to him as righteousness.

 Abraham is considered the father of the Jews. Abraham and his true wife Sarah miraculously conceived and gave birth to their son Isaac. Isaac and his wife Rebekah conceived and gave birth to fraternal twins Esau and Jacob. Isaac blessed Jacob with the firstborn blessing and the familial rights attached to it. And Jacob fathered the sons who founded the twelve tribes of Israel. The bottom-line is that Abraham is considered the father of Judaism.

Acts 3:25 [NIV-1984]

[The Apostle Simon Peter speaking to an assembly of Jews.]

And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He [God] said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'

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Acts 7:57-58, 8:36 [NIV-1984]

[Saul's name was changed to Paul (Acts 13:9). In Saul's early years, he was a fierce Jewish zealot, who did his best to eradicate Christ-followers from Israel and the surrounding area. His brutal tactics included persecution and imprisonment of any he found (Acts 9:1-2).]

⁵⁷ At this they [the Jews] covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

^{8:3} But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

Acts 16:37 [NIV-1984]

[As a Roman citizen through birth, Saul/Paul was afforded citizenship rights for which the majority of the population could only dream.]

But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

Acts 22:3 [NIV-1984]

Then Paul said: "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel [a highly respected, revered Jewish teacher of the law] I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.



The Apostle Paul now launches into a summary of the persecution he has suffered in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ Jesus. The persecutor has become the persecuted. As part of the commissioning process of Saul, Jesus prophesied to the disciple Ananias as recorded in Acts 9:16: "I [Jesus] will show him [Saul] how much he must suffer for my name". (Note: Regarding the confusing names of Saul or Paul: Acts 13:9 begins with these words: "Then Saul, who was also called Paul . . .". Perhaps, the name change indicates 'new life, new name'; obviously, the name Paul did not carry the terrible stigma associated with Saul.)

The commissioning process was profound: the murderous Jewish zealot Saul did a miraculous about-face. He was a murderous persecutor of Christ-followers; his heinous actions were praised and encouraged by the Jewish religious leaders. And then – in the blink of an eye – Saul became a preacher who fiercely proclaimed that Jesus was "the Way and the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). It should be pointed out that, if Jesus' life was a lie, no person would ever devote his life to a mission fraught with the kinds of danger, pain, frustration, and harm Paul suffered.

From many eye-witness interviews, including his own experiences and observations, Doctor Luke compiled the Book we now call the Acts of the Apostles. As we students proceed through the next section of verses, you will find passages from the Book of Acts that help to describe and corroborate the events Paul highlights. While the Book of Acts is not an exhaustive recital of events, both praise-worthy and painful, it nonetheless provides a glimpse into the joys and trials the early church leaders, especially Paul, experienced as they tirelessly proclaimed the Good News of Christ Jesus in the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 5:10-12 [The Message (MSG)]

[An excerpt from the beatitudes — Jesus' teachings:]

¹⁰ "You're blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. The persecution drives you even deeper into God's kingdom.

¹¹⁻¹² "Not only that — count yourselves blessed every time people put you down or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens — give a cheer, even! — for though they don't like it, I do! And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company. My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.

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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.

Q12. ***I am out of my mind to talk like this***: Did boasting come easily to the Apostle Paul? Or was he humble?

Did boasting come easily? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Was Paul humble? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?


Q13. From what you have been able to glean from these verses of Scripture, was Paul ever idle, lazy? Did he live-off the charity of the Corinthians?

Was Paul lazy? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

Did he live-off Corinthian charity? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

Q14. ***Forty lashes minus one***: What is the significance of this: “forty lashes minus one”?


 “None of these are recorded in the Acts. It is probable that the words refer to the early period of his work in Cilicia, which is implied though not recorded in [the] book [of Acts]. ([See Note on Acts 15:41](#)). The number of the stripes in Jewish punishments of this kind rested on the rule of Deuteronomy 25:3 (↓), which fixed forty as the maximum. In practice it was thought desirable to stop short of the full number in order to avoid exceeding it. The punishment was inflicted with a leather scourge of three knotted thongs, and with a curiously elaborate distribution: thirteen strokes were given on the breast, thirteen on the right shoulder, and thirteen on the left.” [©about 1880, Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, edited by Charles J. Ellicott. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-24.htm]

Deuteronomy 25:2-3 [NIV-1984]

² If the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall make him lie down and have him flogged in his presence with the number of lashes his crime deserves, ³ but he must not give him more than forty lashes. If he is flogged more than that, your brother will be degraded in your eyes.

Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Day 4

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

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.

Q15. Why did the loving Lord Jesus allow his chosen disciple Paul to personally experience so many deadly events? (Please keep your answer brief. Some possible helps: Acts 9:15-16 ↓; 2 Corinthians 12:6^b-9 ↓)


Acts 9:15-16 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ But the Lord [Jesus] said to Ananias, "Go! This man [Saul] is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

2 Corinthians 12:6^b-9 [NIV-1984]

^{6b} But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say. ⁷ To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

 **Three times I was beaten with rods:** "In the Acts of the Apostles there is mention made of his being beaten in this manner . . . once before the time when this Epistle was written. That occurred at Philippi; Acts 16:22-23 (↓). But there is no reason to doubt that it was more frequently done. This was a frequent mode of punishment among the ancient nations, and as Paul was often persecuted, he would be naturally subjected to this shameful punishment." [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-25.htm]

Acts 16:22-23, 24 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[An example in which Paul was beaten with rods:]

²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them [naked?] and gave orders to beat them with rods. ²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. ²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into

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the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 14:19-20 [NIV-1984]

[Paul is stoned. People at that time were used to death. If they thought Paul was dead, he was dead. We can assume that in verse 20, when “the disciples gathered around him,” they prayed, God answered, and Paul stood.]


¹⁹ Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.


²⁰ But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

Leviticus 24:13-16 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

[The Jewish laws for blasphemy were codified by this command from God.]

¹³ Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹⁴ “Take the one who spoke against me outside the camp. Then bring together all the people who heard him. They must put their hands on his head [put . . . head: This shows that all these people were sharing in punishing the one who spoke against God]. Then all the people must throw stones at him and kill him. ¹⁵ Tell the people of Israel this: ‘If anyone curses his God, he is guilty of sin. ¹⁶ Anyone who speaks against the Lord must be put to death. All the people must kill him by throwing stones at him. Foreigners must be punished just like the person born in Israel. If someone speaks against the Lord, he must be put to death.’ ”

 **Three times I was shipwrecked:** “On what occasions, or where, is now unknown, as these instances are not referred to in the Acts of the Apostles. The instance of shipwreck recorded [in] Acts 27, which occurred when on his way to Rome, happened after this Epistle was written, and should not be supposed to be one of the instances referred to here. Paul made many voyages in going from Jerusalem to Tarsus, and to Antioch, and to various parts of Asia Minor, and to Cyprus; and shipwrecks in those seas were by no means such unusual occurrences as to render this account improbable.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-25.htm]

 **I spent a night and a day in the open sea:** “To what this refers we do not now certainly know. It is probable, however, that Paul refers to some period when, having been shipwrecked, he was saved by supporting himself on a plank or fragment of the vessel until he obtained relief. Such a situation is one of great peril, and he mentions it, therefore, among the trials which he had endured.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. https://biblehub.com/commentaries/2_corinthians/11-25.htm]

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.


Q16. If the Lord Jesus had not intervened with Saul on the Road to Damascus and Saul had remained a murderous Jewish zealot (aspiring to religious leadership), do you think Saul would have experienced these severe hardships?

Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

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Matthew 8:20 [NIV-1984]

Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."


 Contrast Jesus' life (↑) of an itinerant preacher to that of the prestige-loving Jewish religious leaders (↓).

Matthew 23:2-7 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus observed:]

² "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat [as Jewish leaders]. ³ So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. ⁴ They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

⁵ "Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; ⁶ they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; ⁷ they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them 'Rabbi.'

 Define:
Phylactery; plural: phylacteries.

1. Judaism: either of two small black leather cubes containing pieces of parchment inscribed with specific Biblical verses: worn by Orthodox or Conservative Jewish men during weekday morning prayers, one usu. strapped to the left arm, the other to the head above the hairline. [Random House Kernerman Webster's College Dictionary, © 2010 K Dictionaries Ltd. Copyright 2005, 1997, 1991 by Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. Last-accessed: 01/04/2026.]

Mark 12:38-40 [The Message (MSG)]

He continued teaching. "Watch out for the religion scholars. They love to walk around in academic gowns, preening in the radiance of public flattery, basking in prominent positions, sitting at the head table at every church function. And all the time they are exploiting the weak and helpless. The longer their prayers, the worse they get. But they'll pay for it in the end."

Matthew 24:9 [NIV-1984]


[Jesus promised:]

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.

Luke 21:12 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus promised:]

"But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name.

 See also Acts 9:15-16 (↑), page 9.

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²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Q17. What evidence do we have today that demonstrates Paul's concerns for the churches he founded?

 L T S , which are also called
 E P S T S

Q18. Do we know if the Apostle Paul continued to pray for the churches he founded? Or was it 'out of sight, out of mind'?

1 Thessalonians 1:2 [NIV-1984]

We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.

2 Thessalonians 1:11 [NIV-1984]

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

Ephesians 1:15-18 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. ¹⁸ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

Philippians 1:4-6 [NIV-1984]

⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:3 [NIV-1984]


We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

2 Timothy 1:3 [NIV-1984]

I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers.

Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Day 5

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

²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

Q19. What is the definition of empathy?

 **empathy**

ability to imagine oneself in the condition of another; a vicarious participation in another's emotions: *The widow expressed empathy for the woman who had just lost her husband.*

Not to be confused with:

compassion – a deep sympathy for the sorrows of others, with an urge to alleviate their pain: *The nurse showed great compassion for the injured children.*

sympathy – a general kinship with another's feelings no matter of what kind: *He sent a sympathy card to the widow.*

[Source: Abused, Confused, & Misused Words by Mary Embree Copyright © 2007, 2013 by Mary Embree; <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/empathy>]

Q20. What do the Gospels reveal about Jesus' level of empathy?

John 11:33-35 [NIV-1984]

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled.

³⁴ "Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

³⁵ Jesus wept.

Q21. (Personal) How do you describe the level of your empathy? (i.e., are you empathetic?)

Your empathy level (circle one): Deeply empathetic | Fairly empathetic | Yeah, I get it | Hard to understand | No empathy – narcissistic

Are you happy with your level of empathy? Yes? No? (Why did you circle that answer?)

Q22. Is it easier to be empathetic toward a stranger, a friend, or a loved one? Why?

Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

Q23. (Verse 29) What does this verse reveal about Paul's level of empathy? (Paraphrase: 'When you are weak, I am weak. When you sin, I burn with sorrow.')

.....

.....

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Q24. What does this verse reveal about Paul's character and his attitude toward boasting?

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Q25. If Paul boasts about his weaknesses and people can observe and then infer that his ministry is successful, Who is really honored? How does it demonstrate honor? Is that a worthwhile trait for us to emulate?

Who is really honored?

.....


How does it demonstrate honor?

.....

Is it a worthwhile trait for us to emulate? Yes? No? Why did you circle that answer?

.....

Day 6

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

³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.

Q26. Who is Paul's ultimate authority?

.....

Q27. ***Knows that I am not lying:*** What does this phrase imply?

.....

.....

Lesson 13: 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas [Āh-rēt-ūs] had the city of the Damascenes [Dă-mă-scēns (rhymes with scēnes)] guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Q28. Why did the Roman governor want to arrest Paul?

Q29. Paul escaped, instead of surrendering to an arrest from a government authority. Did Paul sin? (This is a follow-up to the previous lesson — [Lesson #11: 2 Corinthians 10:1-18, pages 5-7](#))

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

Acts 9:22-25 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[Jesus intercepted Saul on the Road to Damascus and transformed the murdering Jewish zealot into a fervent evangelist. After his conversion, Paul then proceeded into Damascus. This event (↓) occurred as Saul preached the Gospel and praised Christ Jesus to Jewish audiences in Damascus synagogues.]

²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ [Messiah].

²³ When many days had passed, the Jews [The Greek word Ioudaioi refers specifically here to Jewish religious leaders, and others under their influence, who opposed the Christian faith at that time] plotted to kill him, ²⁴ but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night in order to kill him, ²⁵ but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket. [Saul then traveled to Jerusalem.]

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