

Joyful Life Bible Studies

II CORINTHIANS

Introduction and Background

Lesson 1

Welcome to the Joyful Life Bible study! There has never been a time when the study of the Bible was more crucial. Although we are living in a time of unprecedented advances in medicine and technology, the average American daily faces the uncertainty of terrorism, and political and economic instability. As believers we need a strong grounding in the Word of God. Through each week's lesson we will have an opportunity to grow spiritually, to strengthen our walk with the Lord, to encourage one another to apply what we learn to our lives, and to be more effective witnesses in these stressful times.

We have chosen II Corinthians for our study this year because it is amazingly relevant to our lives. The church in Corinth was surrounded by idolatry and immorality. Believers were faced with constant pressures from false teachers and detractors. This letter is filled with profound truth to instruct, inspire and edify every believer. Each chapter contains verses that have blessed, encouraged or instructed Christians for generations.

Through the course of your study you will discover and understand why II Corinthians is greatly loved and often quoted. Interestingly, this epistle contains more autobiographical material on Paul than anywhere else in the Bible. It has been said, *this letter is intensely personal and the words are often the language of the heart*. As you study each week consider it a personal letter to you.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God,
and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof,
for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
that the man of God may be perfect,
thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

II Timothy 3:16,17

BACKGROUND TO II CORINTHIANS

AUTHOR OF THE LETTER:

- Paul, the Apostle

WRITTEN TO:

- The church in Corinth
- The saints in all Achaia (Southern Greece)
- All believers everywhere

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING:

- Sometime between A.D. 56-60
- From Macedonia, probably Philippi

PURPOSE FOR WRITING:

- To prepare the way for Paul's third visit to the church in Corinth
- To authenticate Paul's calling by God as an Apostle and his ministry
- To give instructions and practical exhortations to the church
- To comfort and encourage believers



3. During his second missionary journey the Apostle Paul founded and established the church in Corinth. Acts 18:1-18a records additional background information concerning Paul and his ministry in Corinth. Write a brief summary of what happened according to the following verses:
 - a. verses 1-3
 - b. verses 4-6
 - c. verses 7,8
 - d. verses 9-11
 - e. verses 12-18a

*For I am with you . . .
For I have many people in this city.
Acts 18:10 NKJV*

THIRD DAY: The Recipients

1. Identify the recipients of this letter by referring to the Background information on page two of this lesson.
2. Find and circle the city of Corinth on the map printed on page two.

Challenge: Research the ancient city of Corinth and write a brief report of your findings.

3. Taking a brief look at the Corinthian church through a portion of Paul's previous letter will help us understand and appreciate II Corinthians more fully. Paul had a true pastor's heart of love for these believers, who were predominantly Gentile. In I Corinthians Paul both commended and rebuked them. Observe this by writing a few phrases from the following scriptures:
 - a. I Corinthians 1:(4)5-7
 - b. I Corinthians 1:11; 3:3; 5:1,2

4. Through Paul's instruction to this church we also will receive practical principles and guidelines for Christian living. Why is this essential for us today?

FOURTH DAY: The Date and Place of Writing

1. Refer to the Background on page two of this lesson and record the date II Corinthians was possibly written.
2. On the map printed on page two locate and mark the:
 - a. area of Macedonia
 - b. city of Philippi

FIFTH DAY: The Purpose for Writing

1. Consider Paul's purposes for writing the letter of II Corinthians as you record each one from page two:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
2. Which of the purposes for writing this letter especially stirs your interest or increases your desire to study II Corinthians?
 - a. Why?

3. The Corinthian believers were living in a large, wealthy area of Greece filled with idolatry and immorality. Not only was there temptation from without, there was opposition from within. What parallels can you make to our culture today?
 - a. How does this provide you with further incentive to study II Corinthians?

SIXTH DAY: Review

1. Share a way the Introduction on page one of this lesson speaks to you.
2. From your study this week recall and record one interesting discovery or fact about:
 - a. the Apostle Paul
 - b. the recipients of II Corinthians
 - c. the letter of II Corinthians
3. How do you expect to benefit from your study of II Corinthians?
4. The words *joy*, *joyful* and *rejoicing* appear many times in II Corinthians. Explain briefly how studying God's Word and sharing what you learn with others contributes to a *Joyful Life*.

. . . *Your Word was to me*
the joy and rejoicing of my heart . . .
Jeremiah 15:16b NKJV