

Joyful Life Bible Studies

II CORINTHIANS 3:1-6

Lesson 6

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review II Corinthians 2:12-17. Choose one thought, phrase or verse from this passage that continues to minister to you today and write it here.
 - a. *We are the fragrance of Christ in the world.* How does the awareness of this influence your life?

2. The verses we will be studying this week will empower you to be a *living witness* for Jesus Christ. Even though II Corinthians 3:1-6 was written to the Christians at Corinth, they apply to us today. From these verses what particularly captures your attention?

3. This week's lesson reveals that the Christian is a *living letter* from Christ to this world. Write a prayer asking the Lord to use this week's lesson to empower you to be a *living epistle*.

*Lord, I want my life to be
a pure reflection of Your love.*

-selected 

SECOND DAY: Read II Corinthians 3:1,2

1. We are discovering essential, life changing truths through our study of II Corinthians. Today II Corinthians 3:1 introduces us to a passage of scripture that should bless and inspire every Christian. There were people in Corinth who might spin or twist Paul's words and accuse him of boasting and self-commendation. In response to these individuals Paul asked two rhetorical questions. Write them here in your own words:
 - a. verse 1a


 - b. verse 1b

2. The need of a letter of recommendation was common in the first century church. Imposters were numerous and letters of introduction protected the church from most of them. However, once a person's ministry was known there was no longer a need for these letters. Why didn't Paul need letters of recommendation? Answer from II Corinthians 3:2.
 - a. I Corinthians 6:9-11 validates Paul's ministry among the Corinthians. According to these verses what happened to them?
 - (1.) What changes has God made in your life through the ministry of His Word?

3. Consider II Corinthians 3:2 NASB: *You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men.* Think about your life and what it means to be a *living letter*. What is your response to this?

4. The phrase *written in our hearts* from II Corinthians 3:2 means there was a confirmation in Paul's heart of the validity of his ministry because of the Corinthians' changed lives. Their lifestyle stood out in sharp contrast to the immoral and wicked secular culture of Corinth. Their lives gave ample evidence of divine transformation both to Paul and to the world. How does this speak to you about the power of God?

5. How is a transformed life a *living letter* to the world?

*Change my heart oh God, make it ever new.
Change my heart oh God, may I be like You.
-selected *

THIRD DAY: Read II Corinthians 3:3

1. II Corinthians 3:3 expands the topic of the believer being a living *epistle* (letter) of Christ. From this verse identify the following:
 - a. *the epistle* (letter)
 - b. *the epistle's* author
 - c. *the ink*
 - d. *the tables*

2. The key thought of II Corinthians 3:3 is that only God's Spirit could have accomplished the transformation in the lives of these worldly Corinthians. Read the New Living Translation of verse 3c: *It is not carved on stone, but on human hearts.* Link the following scriptures with verse 3 and write what you see:
 - a. Exodus 31:18
 - b. Jeremiah 31:33b
 - c. Ezekiel 11:19,20
 - d. Hebrews 10:16b

3. How would you explain the difference between the Law being written on *tables of stone* and the law being written by the Holy Spirit *in your mind and on your heart*?
 - a. Meditate on Matthew 22:37-39. Why is this absolutely essential to our being an authentic *living epistle* of Christ?

*Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit,
saith the LORD of hosts.
Zechariah 4:6b*

FOURTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 3:4-6

1. II Corinthians 3:4-6 is a practical and powerful portion of God's Word. Paul's response to his critics in II Corinthians 3:1-3 concerning his ministry was not from a heart of arrogance or pride. Observe this by recording key phrases from II Corinthians 3:4,5.

2. Consider II Corinthians 3:4,5 NLT: *We are confident of all this because of our great trust in God through Christ. It is not that we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves. Our only power and success come from God.* Recall the question in II Corinthians 2:16b. Who was Paul's total *sufficiency or source of competence* for the ministry?
 - a. The realization that we are both *the fragrance of Christ* (II Corinthians 2:15) and *Christ's living letter* (II Corinthians 3:2,3) might produce feelings of inadequacy. How should II Corinthians 3:5 dispel or eradicate this?
 - (1.) Consider memorizing this verse, if possible. Begin by writing it here personalizing it.

3. The principle in these verses is not limited to those who are employed in the ministry but includes all who serve Jesus Christ. The word *sufficiency* (hikanotes) in II Corinthians 3:5 is derived from a Greek word that means *competence, fitness, or capability*. **God always equips us with the ability to do whatever He requires.** How does this minister to you?
 - a. How does Philippians 4:13 confirm this truth?

 - b. When we recognize that God is the source of all of our ability, He receives the praise and glory. Why is this important?

4. Complete today's lesson by writing a prayer here asking the Lord to make the truths of II Corinthians 3:4,5 real to you.

... for without Me you can do nothing.
John 15:5c NKJV

FIFTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 3:4-6

1. II Corinthians 3:6 concludes the paragraph on the subject of the believer's sufficiency in Christ. Notice the phrase *hath made us* is in the past tense. How does this phrase encourage you concerning the work God has done for us according to II Corinthians 3:6a?
 - a. *He prepares us for the work and He prepares the work for us.* How do the following verses confirm this:
 - (1.) Ephesians 2:10
 - (2.) Philippians 2:13
 - (3.) Cite an example of this from your life.
2. Consider II Corinthians 3:6 NLT: *He is the One Who has enabled us to represent His new covenant. This is a covenant, not of written laws, but of the Spirit. The old way ends in death; in the new way, the Holy Spirit gives life.* How do the following scriptures verify this:
 - a. Romans 3:20
 - b. Galatians 2:16
 - c. Hebrews 7:19
3. Compare II Corinthians 3:6 with Romans 7:6 NLT: *Now we can fully serve God, not in the old way by obeying the letter of the law, but in the new way, by the Spirit.* What can the Spirit provide under the new covenant that the letter of the law under the old covenant could not?
4. We have been made *able ministers* of the gospel. How should II Corinthians 3:6 dismiss any fears of inadequacy in sharing His Good News?

SIXTH DAY: Review II Corinthians 3:1-6

1. With II Corinthians 3:1-6 in mind write a brief comment about the following topics:
 - a. *living epistles*
 - b. *our sufficiency*
 - c. *able ministers*
2. Share one thing you have learned from your study this week about living the Christian life as a representative of our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. How will II Corinthians 3:4-6 keep us from the trap of self-sufficient pride or feelings of inadequacy?
4. Which facet or aspect of this week's lesson especially ministered to you?
 - a. Share why.
5. Why do you think the principles in II Corinthians 3:1-6 are essential for all Christians to know, understand and apply?

*Now unto Him that is able to do
exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,
according to the power that worketh in us.
Ephesians 3:20*