

# Joyful Life Bible Studies

## II CORINTHIANS 4:7-18

Lesson 9

### FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. With last week's study of II Corinthians 4:1-6 in mind, answer the following questions:
  - a. What example is there for you to follow?
  - b. What do you want to avoid?
  - c. What specific action will you take in response to the lesson or lecture?
2. Through our study of II Corinthians 4:7-18 this week we will find purpose and meaning for our lives. Paul's practical illustrations and examples written to the Corinthians in these verses will strengthen and encourage us today. Read II Corinthians 4:7-18. Choose and record a thought, phrase or verse that particularly captures your attention.
3. The Lord ministers to each of us and meets our needs through a prayerful study of His Word. With this in mind read the scripture below. Express to the Lord your deepest desire and greatest need as you begin your verse by verse study of II Corinthians 4:7-18. Write your prayer here.

*For whatsoever things were written aforetime  
were written for our learning,  
that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures  
might have hope.  
Romans 15:4*

**SECOND DAY:** Read II Corinthians 4:7

1. Expect to be blessed and encouraged through today's study of II Corinthians 4:7. Consider the remarkable illustration and the wonder of verse 7 as you write it here phrase by phrase. Selah.

a. In what way is the gospel like a *treasure*?

b. We are like *clay pots* or *jars of clay*. Describe the perishable nature of these *clay pots* from Genesis 3:19 and James 4:14.

(1.) What similarities do you see between our earthly bodies and *earthen vessels*?

2. In spite of our weaknesses and failures, inadequacies and inability, we have been chosen by God to contain His treasure. Why did God choose to place this *treasure* in *earthen vessels*? Answer from II Corinthians 4:7b.

Challenge: Read other versions of II Corinthians 4:7 and note additional words or phrases that are used to describe *the excellency of the power*.

3. Although the primary focus should be on the *treasure*, as His *vessel* what do the following verses say to you:

a. Matthew 5:16

b. Philippians 2:15

c. II Timothy 2:21

Optional: Read Judges 7:(16-19)20. Notice what had to happen before the light could shine out of the earthen *pitchers*. What does this say to you?

4. Share what it means to you that you are an *earthen vessel* containing the priceless *treasure* of the gospel of Christ.

**THIRD DAY:** Read II Corinthians 4:8-12

1. These fragile, earthen vessels are subject to the problems and sufferings common to man. The great difference for Christians is that we have help and hope. Observe Paul's analysis of his circumstances by reading II Corinthians 4:8,9. Complete the following chart, using other versions if you desire:

We are	We are not
verse 8a	verse 8a
verse 8b	verse 8b
verse 9a	verse 9a
verse 9a	verse 9b

- a. Look over this list once more. What comfort or encouragement do you receive from these verses?

2. II Corinthians 4:10-12 is Paul's personal testimony. Most of us probably will never experience the extreme persecution he suffered. The constant giving up of his own life, *always facing death*, revealed the victorious, risen Saviour to those who heard him. Today when a Christian suffers as a faithful servant of Christ because of persecution and opposition, how are others affected?

Advanced Students: Ponder the relationship between II Corinthians 4:10-12 and Philippians 3:10. Record any insights you have on this.

3. II Corinthians 4:8-12 reveals that for the Christian out of seeming defeat comes victory; out of suffering comes glory; and out of death comes life, as Jesus' death and resurrection powerfully illustrates. How does this minister to you today?

*God doesn't promise us heaven on this sin-cursed earth.  
But when by faith we see the spiritual dimension –  
the power of God, the hand of God, the love of God – we gain strength to endure.*  
-Pastor Chuck

**FOURTH DAY:** Read II Corinthians 4:13-15

1. Do you realize today how essential *faith* is to every area of your Christian life? *To be able to be courageous, non-compromising Christians, resisting the customs and culture of the world and its determined opposition to Christ, and be a witness through our word and our life, we **must have an unshakable faith founded on truth.*** What is your response to this?
  - a. Follow the apostles' example in Luke 17:5. Write your prayer here.
  
2. Observe Paul's faith recorded in II Corinthians 4:13 NLT: *But we continue to preach because we have the same kind of faith the psalmist had when he said: "I believed in God, and so I speak."* Read II Corinthians 4:14 to discover one foundational truth for Paul's unwavering faith. Although he was in constant danger of being killed for proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ, what did Paul know?
  - a. What more does Romans 8:11 tell us about this?
  - b. KNOWING the truth concerning the resurrection is essential to our faith. What assurance does this truth give you no matter what your circumstances?
  
3. With eternity in view Paul willingly suffered to share the gospel. Consider the results of his ministry as revealed in II Corinthians 4:15 NLT: *All of these things are for your benefit. And as God's grace brings more and more people to Christ, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.* How does this inspire and motivate you?
  
4. Share something from Paul's example that particularly speaks to you.

**FIFTH DAY:** Read II Corinthians 4:16-18

1. In II Corinthians 4:16-18 Paul continued to share his heart-felt convictions with his readers. These verses contain significant insights that, if applied, will enable us to gain and maintain an *eternal perspective*. Through the previous verses we have seen that Paul and his co-workers lived with the confident hope of eternal life. From verse 16a what did this enable them to do?

- a. You will recall this is the second time Paul used the phrase *we faint not*. (II Corinthians 4:1) Complete his powerful statement from verse 16b:

*but though \_\_\_\_\_, yet the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.*

- (1.) Define the following: (Use other versions to help you with your answer.)

(a.) *inner man*

(b.) *renewed*

- (2.) What does this mean to you?

- b. From the following verses record resources that are available to us for daily renewal:

(1.) Isaiah 40:31

(2.) Romans 12:(1)2

2. Consider the comparisons and evaluations in II Corinthians 4:17,18. Write a few of them from the following verses:

a. verse 17

b. verse 18

Challenge: For a glimpse of Paul's *afflictions* scan II Corinthians 11:23-28. How do you think he could view these as *light afflictions*?

3. *So 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* (II Corinthians 4:18 NIV). Give a practical example of how to do this.

- a. Weigh today's suffering and afflictions in the light of eternal glory. What affect does this have on your attitude and perspective?

*When we let our vision become earth-bound we lose our eternal perspective.*

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**SIXTH DAY:** Review II Corinthians 4:7-18

1. In response to your study of II Corinthians 4:7-18 share an insight on each of the following:
  - a. *treasure in earthen vessels*
  - b. *death and life*
  - c. *faith*
  - d. *light affliction and eternal glory*
  - e. *temporal and eternal*
2. What have you learned from Paul's example that you can apply to your life?
3. In what way does II Corinthians 4:7-18:
  - a. challenge you
  - b. inspire you
4. How does an *eternal perspective* affect our attitudes, actions and reactions?

*Glory*  
*Weight of glory*  
*Eternal weight of glory*  
*Exceeding and eternal weight of glory*  
*More exceeding and eternal weight of glory*  
*Far more exceeding and eternal*  
*weight of glory*  
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