

# Joyful Life Bible Studies

## II CORINTHIANS 11:16-33

Lesson 18

### FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Review II Corinthians 11:1-15. Which instruction or warning from these verses influenced you the most in your Christian walk this week?
  
2. This week's study of II Corinthians 11:16-33 presents a thought-provoking and inspiring portion of scripture. In an attempt to silence his false accusers Paul continued his reluctant but necessary *boasting*. These verses record many of Paul's sufferings and hardships as an apostle and servant of the Lord. Let Paul's experiences touch your heart through the study of these verses. Choose and record a verse or phrase from II Corinthians 11:16-33 that particularly impresses you today.
  - a. Share why.
  
3. Prepare your mind and heart to receive all the Lord has for you through your study this week by writing a prayer. Also express your thanks and praise to Him for what he has done and for hearing and answering your prayer.

*Come and see what God has done,  
how awesome His works in man's behalf!  
He has preserved our lives . . .  
Praise be to God, Who has not rejected my prayer  
or withheld His love from me!*  
Psalm 66:5,9,20 NIV

**SECOND DAY: Read II Corinthians 11:16-21**

1. Today's study centers on remarks Paul made before he presented his credentials. Read II Corinthians 11:16-19 NIV: *I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!* Compare this version with the KJV. Describe the tone in which you think this was written.

a. The phrase *seeing ye yourselves are wise* (verse 19b KJV) is probably a reference to the Corinthians' pride in their own wisdom. Why is relying on human wisdom in spiritual matters dangerous?

(1.) What does Proverbs 3:5-7a say about this?

2. Read II Corinthians 11:20,21. Earlier Paul expressed his dismay at the Corinthian believers' acceptance of false doctrine. Here he expressed his distress over their tolerance of mistreatment by the deceitful workers. From verse 20 list the various ways they had been mistreated.

Note: The phrase *smite you on the face* may be a metaphor for the extent of control these false teachers exerted over the believers or it may refer to them actually slapping the mouth of anyone whom they considered speaking arrogantly to them. John 18:22, Acts 23:2

a. Why do you think they would tolerate this kind of behavior?

Advanced Students: There are differences of opinion concerning the meaning of II Corinthians 11:21. Research this verse and record your findings.

3. Use the following verses to discover and record key characteristics by which we can recognize a true minister of Christ:

a. John 13:34,35

b. I Peter 5:2,3

**THIRD DAY:** Read II Corinthians 11:22-25

1. Apparently the false teachers were overly impressed with their heritage and boasted about it. In II Corinthians 11:22 Paul began to present his heritage by once again using questions to make his point. Print his response to these questions.
  - a. How do the following scriptures confirm this:
    - (1.) Philippians 3:5
    - (2.) Romans 9:3b,4a
    - (3.) Romans 11:1
2. In II Corinthians 11:23 Paul began to present his credentials. Write his question from verse 23a.
  - a. Define the word *minister* as it is used here.
  - b. Although Paul felt foolish about it, he declared, *I am more*. Consider the measure of Paul's sufferings as you list the four areas Paul pointed to in verse 23b.
3. Read II Corinthians 11:24,25 and think about the awful suffering Paul experienced because he was Christ's bondservant. What effect should this have had on those who questioned his authority?
  - a. We know that some Christians suffer more than others for the sake of Christ, yet notice what Paul said in II Timothy 3:12. Comment on this.
    - (1.) All believers will experience a degree of suffering. What hope and encouragement does Psalm 34:19 and John 16:33b provide?

*But thou has fully known my doctrine, manner of life,  
... what persecutions I endured:  
but out of them all the Lord delivered me.  
II Timothy 3:10a,11b*

**FOURTH DAY:** Read II Corinthians 11:26-29

1. It has been said, *Paul's scars were his credentials*. In addition to being beaten, stoned and imprisoned, Paul experienced many perils and hardships. Record several of them from the following verses:
  - a. II Corinthians 11:26
  
  - b. II Corinthians 11:27
  
  - c. Which of these especially grips your heart today?
  
2. Read the following Amplified version of II Corinthians 11:28: *And besides those things that are without, there is the daily [inescapable pressure] of my care and anxiety for all the churches!* What does this reveal about the depth of responsibility Paul felt as a spiritual shepherd?
  - a. The word *care* means *pressure, stress, anxiety*. Even great men like Paul are subject to internal pressures because of their concern for the spiritual welfare of others. A few years after Paul wrote this letter, what instruction did he give believers in Philippians 4:6 concerning cares and anxieties?
    - (1.) What is promised to those who follow this instruction? Print your answer from Philippians 4:7.
  
3. Sense Paul's concern for those he served as you read II Corinthians 11:29 TLB: *Who makes a mistake and I do not feel his sadness? Who falls without my longing to help him? Who is spiritually hurt without my fury rising against the one who hurt him?* How does Paul's attitude reflect the heart of Jesus, our Good Shepherd?
  - a. How does Romans 12:15 speak to you as a servant of the Lord?
  
4. Share a way Paul's commitment, courage and compassion ministers to you today.

**FIFTH DAY:** Read II Corinthians 11:30-33

1. Paul's example in II Corinthians 11:30 should inspire each of us. Rather than *boasting* or *glorying* in his accomplishments, in what did Paul choose to *glory*?

a. *I would rather boast about the things that show how weak I am* (NLT). What does this reveal to you about Paul?

(1.) What inspiration do you receive from Paul's example?

2. Paul must have known that his enemies in Corinth would accuse him of exaggerating or lying about his sufferings and his concern for the churches. Write Paul's defense to this from II Corinthians 11:31.

a. How should this have affected his accusers?

3. Paul wrote about an actual account of a life-threatening experience which happened in Damascus soon after his conversion. Combine II Corinthians 11:32-33 with Acts 9:20-25 and write a short news article about his radical experience.

a. What headline would you give for Paul's escape?

Advanced Students: Research and identify King Aretas mentioned in II Corinthians 11:32.

4. Do you have a compelling experience of deliverance? If so, briefly note it here.

*Oh no, You never let go, through the calm and through the storm.*

*Oh no, You never let go, in every high and every low.*

*Oh no, You never let go,*

*Lord, You never let go of me.*

-selected 

