

Joyful Life Bible Studies

II CORINTHIANS 12:11-21

Lesson 20

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. Consider what you gleaned from last week's lesson or lecture on II Corinthians 12:1-10. What difference has this made in your life?
 - a. Review verses 7-10. Instead of focusing on the negative aspect of Paul's *thorn in the flesh*, think about the benefits that resulted from it. List a few of them here.
2. Even though II Corinthians 12:11-21 was written to prepare the Corinthian church for Paul's visit, every Christian should profit from a study of these verses. As Paul neared the end of his letter he made a few more attempts to disarm these believers' suspicion and win their confidence before he met with them face to face. Familiarize yourself with this passage by reading verses 11-21. Write the phrase or verse that especially stands out to you and share why.
3. Recognizing the importance of prayer in the study of God's Word should motivate each of us to pray. Write a prayer asking the Lord to use II Corinthians 12:11-21 to edify you, increase your faith and strengthen your walk with Him.

*But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before
by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ:
... building yourselves up on your most holy faith,
praying in the Holy Spirit. . .*
Jude 17,20a NKJV

FIRST DAY: Read II Corinthians 12:11-13

1. By this time Paul must have grown weary of defending himself, yet once again he was forced to defend his apostleship. See this through II Corinthians 12:11 NIV: *I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing.* Have you ever been placed in a position of having to defend yourself when others could and should have come to your defense? What insight does this give you on verse 11?
 - a. Use II Corinthians 12:12 and Hebrews 2:4 to identify the evidence of Paul's apostleship.
 - b. What was the greatest sign that validated Paul's apostleship? See both I Corinthians 9:1,2 and II Corinthians 3:1-3a.
2. In the New Testament events of supernatural origin are called *signs, wonders* and *miracles*. *Signs* are events that signify something about God or His working. *Wonders* are events that cause *wonder* – always used together with the term *signs*. *Miracles* or *mighty deeds* are events of divine power. Write a brief summary of the *signs, wonders* and *miracles* through the ministry of the Apostle Paul recorded in the following verses:
 - a. Acts 13:6-12
 - b. Acts 14:8-10
 - c. Acts 16:16-18
 - d. Acts 19:11,12
 - e. Although there is no biblical record of specific *signs, wonders* and *miracles* that happened in Corinth, what phrase in II Corinthians 12:12 indicates they did occur?
3. Observe Paul's rhetorical questions and remarks from II Corinthians 12:13 Phillips, *What makes you feel so inferior to other Churches? Is it because I have not allowed you to support me financially? My humblest apologies for this great wrong!* Bible expositors think Paul was using *subtle irony*. Define the word *irony*.
 - a. What do you think?

THIRD DAY: Read II Corinthians 12:14-18

1. Observe Paul's love for these Christians as you complete his sentence from II Corinthians 12:14: *Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you:*

- a. *and I will not*
- b. *for I seek not*
- c. *for the children ought not*

(1.) The principle in verse 14c could be applied to each one of us because we are all a spiritual parent to someone younger than we are. What are you laying up spiritually for the next generation?

2. How does II Corinthians 12:15 confirm Paul's statement about himself in II Corinthians 4:5?

- a. Give a brief explanation for the following phrase: *spend and be spent*.

(1.) Notice Paul's attitude though the phrases *very gladly* and *though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved*. What can we learn from his example?

- b. Our natural love is limited but Christ's love through us is unlimited. Ponder His enabling love as you write I Corinthians 13:7,8a.

3. Read II Corinthians 12:16-18. The false teachers apparently had accused Paul of being *crafty* and using *guile*. View Paul's reply through verse 16 NLT: *Some of you admit I was not a burden to you. But they still think I was sneaky and took advantage of you by trickery*. In verses 17,18 Paul asked questions that should have caused these believers to recognize the truth. What is the obvious answer to his questions?

- a. Pastor Chuck says: *Paul pointed out that neither he, Titus, nor the other brethren had taken any money from the Corinthians for themselves*. With this in mind review Paul's previous comments in II Corinthians 8:16,23. What affect should this have had on this issue?

FOURTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 12:19,20

1. As their pastor-teacher Paul was deeply concerned about the spiritual condition and welfare of Corinthian believers. Today's study of II Corinthians 12:19,20 will confirm this. Read verse 19 and print the endearing term Paul used to address them.

a. In verse 19 NKJV Paul asked: *Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you?* Answer his question by completing the following phrases from this verse:

(1.) *we speak*

(a.) Explain what this phrase means.

(2.) *but we do all things . . . for*

(a.) Define the phrase *for your edifying*.

(3.) Think about these phrases in relationship to your service for Christ. Record your thoughts.

2. Read II Corinthians 12:20. As Paul's next visit to the Corinthian church approached, he candidly addressed his concerns. What *fear* did Paul first express in verse 20a?

a. If Paul found the believers still indulging in sins of the flesh and spirit, how would *he be found unto them?* Answer from II Corinthians 13:2b.

b. In verse 20 Paul used the word *lest* twice in relationship to his *fear* over them and his upcoming *third visit*. What did Paul *fear* he would find in the church? Answer by listing the sins from verse 20b KJV in the left-hand column and defining each by writing a synonym in the right-hand column:

II Corinthians 12:20b	Synonym
(1.)	(1.)
(2.)	(2.)
(3.)	(3.)
(4.)	(4.)
(5.)	(5.)
(6.)	(6.)
(7.)	(7.)
(8.)	(8.)

c. I Corinthians 3:3 reveals that they were *carnal*. Define *carnal* in your own words using Romans 8:5-7.

3. With today's study in mind read the following quote and write your response:

*You will notice that none of these sins is a flagrant vice.
These are not the violent sins of the flesh,
but those vicious sins of the carnal disposition.
These sins are destructive to the peace (and progress) of the church.
They cause dissensions that result divisions*
-selected

FIFTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 12:20,21

1. In anticipation of his visit to Corinth, Paul hoped his letter would have the effect of a thorough cleansing in the believers' lives. We, as the bride of Christ, are being prepared for a much greater visit than Paul's to Corinth. In anticipation of Jesus' return, what would you recommend to any Christian who recognized himself or herself in the II Corinthians 12:20 list?

2. Read II Corinthians 12:21 NIV: *I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.* Why would it be a humiliation for Paul to find that many of these believers had not repented of their gross immorality?
 - a. The KJV word *bewail* (grieved) indicates *an intense mourning* as for the dead. To understand Paul's grief we need to see the importance of repentance from God's perspective. When we refuse, neglect or avoid repentance, what are we saying about our sin?
 - (1.) What is lacking in a Christian who doesn't repent? Answer from II Corinthians 7:10a.

 - (2.) When we repent of a sin, what are we saying to God about that sin?
 - (a.) What does I John 1:9 promise to those who repent?

3. It is thought that the lack of repentance led many in the Corinthian church to resume their old immoral practices. How could the lack of repentance be used by Satan to ensnare a Christian again into immorality?
 - a. Earlier in II Corinthians 6:17,18; 7:1 Paul dealt with the issue of sin in the life of the believer. Review these verses and summarize what he said.

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*
Psalm 51:10 🎵

SIXTH DAY: Review II Corinthians 12:11-21

1. Which area of Paul's defense in II Corinthians 12:11-13 impressed you the most?
 - a. Why?

2. If the believers in the Corinthian church would have contrasted Paul's attitude and behavior as revealed in II Corinthians 12:14-19b with the exploitive, selfish behavior of the false teachers described in II Corinthians 11:20, what difference would it have made?
 - a. In what particular way is Paul an example for you?

3. II Corinthians 12:20b challenges Christians to *spiffy up* their lives. Link verse 20b with Philippians 2:14. How does this speak to you today?

4. Share an aspect of this week's lesson that especially ministered to you.

5. Repentance and mercy are entwined in God's love for His dear children. Write your expression of loving gratitude to the Lord for His instant forgiveness.

*Over every thought, over every word,
may my life reflect the beauty of our Lord.
'Cause You mean more to me than any earthly thing.
So won't You reign in me again.
-selected 🎵*