

Joyful Life Bible Studies

II CORINTHIANS 13:1-14

Lesson 21

FIRST DAY: Review and Overview

1. In light of last week's study of II Corinthians 12:11-21 write your response to the following questions:
 - a. In what way does Paul's example of love speak to you today?
 - b. Why do Christians living in 2008 still need to heed the strong warnings of verses 20,21?

2. This week's lesson provides one more opportunity for us to benefit from II Corinthians as we complete our study of this valuable letter. In Chapter 13 we will notice a mixture of sternness and tenderness as Paul gave final exhortations and instructions to the Corinthian church. Read the following paragraphs and give a brief title for each:
 - a. II Corinthians 13:1-4
 - b. II Corinthians 13:5-10
 - c. II Corinthians 13:11-14

3. Approach each day of your lesson this week with an open heart and a prayer of thanksgiving. Begin now by asking the Lord to help you not miss anything He has for you in the last chapter of II Corinthians. Express your desire to apply what you learn to your life. Write your prayer here.


*So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth;
it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please,
and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*
Isaiah 55:11 NKJV

SECOND DAY: Read II Corinthians 13:1-4

1. Sense the stern tone in II Corinthians 13:1-4 as Paul wrote to prepare the Corinthian church for his next visit. In his warning Paul quoted Deuteronomy 19:15. Who was Paul's warning in verse 2 directed toward?
 - a. Briefly explain the meaning of the phrase: *I will not spare*. See II Corinthians 13:10.
 - b. Paul was ready to take disciplinary action if necessary. Based on what you have learned about Paul's character through the study of II Corinthians, what assurance do you have that he would have done what was necessary in a just and fair way?

2. Read II Corinthians 13:3,4. The Corinthians' requirement for *a proof of Christ speaking* through Paul (verse 3a) was the result of the false apostles' accusation recorded in II Corinthians 10:10b. Review this accusation by writing it here.
 - a. Consider the wisdom in Paul's response from II Corinthians 13:3b,4 NLT: *Christ is not weak in His dealings with you; He is a mighty power among you. Although He died on the cross in weakness, He now lives by the mighty power of God. We, too, are weak, but we live in Him and have God's power – the power we use in dealing with you.* What affect should this have had on his accusers?

3. As servants of Christ we also are weak in ourselves, yet we live by the power of God. Share what it means in your life to *live* by the power of God through Christ.

*Every day I look to You to be the strength of my life.
You're the hope I hold on to
to be the strength of my life.
You're the strength of my life. You're the strength of my life today.*
-selected 

THIRD DAY: Read II Corinthians 13:5,6

1. Throughout our study of this letter we have noted that Paul was pressed by his critics to prove his apostolic authority. Again and again he had provided indisputable evidence of the authenticity of his ministry. Now, it was up to them to *prove* themselves. Read II Corinthians 13:5,6. What exhortation did Paul give them in verse 5a?
 - a. If they were genuine Christians, not *reprobates* (disqualified), what would they *know* about:
 - (1.) themselves (verse 5b)
 - (2.) Paul (verse 6)
2. Pastor Chuck says: *There were people in Corinth who were doing things that are totally out of character for a child of God. Many of them had been attacking Paul. So Paul gave them a good piece of advice, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves."* Many people living lives of sin believe they are Christians. Why is it important for us to examine ourselves?
 - a. Too often we are ready to examine others, but first we must always examine ourselves. What evidence should there be in your life *that Jesus Christ is in you?* Use the following verses to help you with your answer:
 - (1.) I John 2:3-6
 - (2.) I John 3:10,18,19
 - (3.) I John 5:11,12
3. What difference would it have made in their lives if the Corinthians had examined themselves before Paul's visit?
4. Heart examinations are vital to our spiritual health! Make David's prayer from Psalm 139:23,24 your prayer as you write it here.

FOURTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 13:7-10

1. II Corinthians 13:7-10 reveals Paul's heart for these believers. Record his desires for them according to the following verses:
 - a. verse 7
 - b. verse 9b
 - (1.) Bible scholars suggest that the Greek word translated *perfection* depicts *bones being realigned* or *adjusted*. By twisting the truth the false teachers had caused maladjustments in the body of believers that hindered the Corinthians' spiritual growth and maturity. Share any insights this gives you on Paul's *wish* (prayer) for them.
 - c. Write phrases from verses 7 and 9 that reveal Paul's pure motives.
2. Link II Corinthians 13:9b with Jesus' command in Matthew 5:48. Realizing that spiritual maturity is the goal of the Christian, list a few ingredients that contribute to our maturing in Christ.
3. Consider II Corinthians 13:8 NLT: *Our responsibility is never to oppose the truth, but to stand for the truth at all times.* How does this verse speak to you today?
4. Read II Corinthians 13:10. By the time Paul arrived in Corinth what had he hoped his letter would have accomplished?
 - b. Pastor Chuck says: *Paul was telling the Corinthian Christians some difficult things by letter so that they could absorb it, pray about it, and deal with it before he got there in person. He wanted to build them up, not to destroy them, so they would have something to celebrate about when he arrived. Sometimes God has a tough message to deliver to us, and it hurts. But He is always only hurting us to keep us from hurting ourselves even more. He is trying to build us up, but some demolition may be necessary first.* Write your response to this.

Our greatest wish and prayer is that you will become mature Christians.
II Corinthians 13:9b TLB

FIFTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 13:11-14

1. *Farewell* is a lovely, old-fashioned term for *good bye*. One paraphrase of II Corinthians 13:11a records this word as *rejoice*. *Be cheerful, be well, and joy* are several of the definitions of the Greek word *chairō*. Use verse 11a to complete Paul's *farewell* exhortations to the Corinthian church. Next to each exhortation write a personal application for your life:

Farewell exhortation (verse 11a)	Application for your life
----------------------------------	---------------------------

be _____,

be ___ _____,

be ___ _____,

live ___ _____;

- a. Think about the importance of each of these. Failing to apply these commands will cause chaos in the body of believers. When you find yourself not conforming to these exhortations, what should you do?
 - b. How does the promise in verse 11b motivate you to apply these exhortations?
2. Notice the affection Paul encouraged among these believers in II Corinthians 13:12,13. In the early church the *holy kiss* was an expression of *forgiveness*; a symbol of peace and fellowship. Our culture doesn't lend itself to the *holy kiss*. Yet, there is still a need for Christians to convey love and greetings to one another. In what special ways are we able to do this?
 3. The benediction in II Corinthians 13:14 emphasizes the trinity - Father, Son and Holy Ghost - and the blessings we received because we belong to God. Notice the order: it is through the *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ* that we come to know *the love of God* and experience the *communion* or *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. The word *Amen* affirms the blessings to all Christians. Share what these blessings mean to you today.
 - a. Write your expression of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord for these glorious blessings.

SIXTH DAY: Review II Corinthians 13:1-14

1. Share what helped you the most this week in your study of II Corinthians 13:1-14.

2. Why it always important for Christians to *examine themselves*?

3. How would you explain to a new believer the meaning of the exhortation to *be perfect*?

4. Choose a verse from the letter of II Corinthians that has especially ministered to you and write it here.
 - a. Share why.

5. Which facet of this year's study in II Corinthians has been most valuable or meaningful to you?

6. What difference has your study of II Corinthians made in your life this year?

Be cheerful - Be well - Rejoice!

Farewell