



FOR GROUPS MEETING: April 27-May 2

SERIES: 2 Corinthians

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

For the next few months our church family will be walking through the book of 2 Corinthians. In this study we will come face to face with God's design for the Church, our lives, and ultimately our world. Paul will go at length discussing the nature of his ministry, as well as discussing the nature of the intermediate time between salvation and eternity. Paul will discuss our need for Biblical Stewardship as well as practically giving some suggestions for how we might live this out. Lastly Paul will address some false teachings that in many ways are still around today. We know that God is going to use this teaching over these next few months to grow us and grow His Kingdom here on Staten Island.

This week we will be looking at what Paul has to say about suffering and difficult times in the Christian life. No one can perfectly answer the question of why we suffer, but Paul does a great job of offering a helpful perspective in the first few verses that will challenge us no matter what stage of life we might be in.

TO COMPLETE THIS WEEK'S STUDY

- You will need:
 - A Bible
 - A quiet place for prayer, reading, and reflection
 - A pencil or a pen
- Read the **Introduction to Study**.
- Move through the daily studies consecutively.
- Open and close each day in prayer.
- Meditate on each question as you feel led.
- Record your answers in the space to the right of each day's questions.
- If you miss a day, don't worry. Simply pick up where you left off.

Dig Deeper

Some people would like to go deeper in their study. If you would like to do so and have the time, please take advantage of the Dig Deeper sections of this Group Life lesson.



PASSION FOR GOD. COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE.

(day 1)

Prayer: Lord teach my heart what it means to truly trust you in any situation because of your great character.

Intro: *We will be starting with the first few verses of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. In the majority of this section, Paul will be speaking about trials and suffering; but before he does this, he writes a pivotal verse that we will explore today.*

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:1-3

1.) Why do you think Paul would have begun his discussion on trials and suffering with verse 3?

2.) Many times, we view who God is through the lens of what is going on in our lives. However, in this section of Scripture, Paul begins by declaring whom he knows God to be before addressing his circumstances. Why do you think he did this?

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Some of you tell God how big your mountains are; but what you should be doing is telling your mountains how big your God is." –Jerry Falwell, Sr.

How does this quote apply to what Paul is doing in this passage?



(day 2)

Prayer: Lord help me to believe that in the midst of great pain, You are the God of all comfort.

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:4-5

1.) Paul seems to list two benefits of suffering and trials. What are they?

2.) What are some lessons that God has taught you during the difficult seasons of your life? What lessons would you share with others who may be going through the same thing?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Read Philippians 3:10. How does this verse parallel what Paul is teaching in verse 5?



(day 3)

Prayer: Lord help me to embrace the difficult times in my life as opportunities to learn more from You, and grow in intimacy with You.

Intro: *There is a problematic teaching going on in the church today that says that if you're going through a difficult time, God is punishing you. Furthermore, this teaching states that happiness and comfort are the goals of Christianity. Let's see what the apostle Paul has to say in this passage about this teaching.*

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:6-8

1.) Does the apostle Paul seem to state here that suffering is avoidable and should be avoided at all costs? What does he say about suffering?

2.) The apostle Paul was one of the noblest men to ever live, yet he lived a life of great suffering (see verse 8). How does his example seem to line up with the teaching given in the "intro" of today's study?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Read James 1:2-4. How do these verses add to what Paul says in 2 Cor 1:6-7 in regards to what our perspective on suffering and trials should be?



(day 4)

Pray: Lord help me to be reminded that one of the foremost aims of daily living as a Christian is dependence on You.

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

1.) In accordance with what Paul stated in vs. 4-7, what lesson did Paul share with the Corinthian church that God had taught him in the midst of his trial?

2.) One of the most important questions we must ask when going through a difficult season is what are we placing our hope and dependence on? How does Paul address where our hope and dependence should be, in this section of verses?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Read John 15:1-6. How does Jesus address the question of dependence in this section of Scripture?



(day 5)

Prayer: Lord give me the courage to depend on others when going through difficult times.

Read: 2 Corinthians 1:11

Intro: *Oftentimes, we would rather maintain the appearance of being okay instead of asking others around us for help or for prayer during difficult seasons. Paul condones a different way of relating to others in difficult times, let's read to find out.*

1.) In the context of this chapter where Paul has addressed where his hope is found in the midst of severe trials (see verse 10), he still asks something of the believers in Corinth. What does he ask from them?

2.) What can make us reluctant to follow in Paul's example?

DIGGING DEEPER:

Do you have a few people in your life right now that you can depend on when life gets difficult?

If not, who is someone that you could? After all, the Christian life is not meant to be lived alone.

