

## 2Corinthians Study Ahead

2Corinthians was a follow-up letter, continuing to resolve difficult issues in the Corinthian church. Most prominent in this letter is Paul's extended effort to *defend his apostleship* to a group of people that had their doubts about him. Our approach to this letter will be topical. Our first study will focus on the themes of TRIALS and SPIRITUAL GROWTH. The 2<sup>nd</sup> study will focus on our participation with God in REACHING OUT to those around us and GIVING to God's work.

**TRIALS:** Paul spends considerable time dealing with trials (his own) and how God uses them in our lives to shape us for His purposes and to reveal His attributes to a watching world (through our weaknesses).

**1:3-7:** How does God shapes us through trials in these opening lines?

**1:8-11:** Note how severe Paul's trials were. Note also how he asked for their prayers in making it through trials.

**2:12,13 and 7:5-7:** See how Paul at times "*had no rest for his spirit*" and could even be "*depressed?*" What did Paul use to lift his spirit (7:6)?

**4:7-15:** What does he mean: "we have this treasure in earthen vessels?" What is his point about the power of God being seen?

**4:16-18:** What was Paul's ultimate perspective on his earthly trials?

**5:1-8:** How did his view of the afterlife impact his view of this life?

**11:21-33:** How does Paul's description of his trials impact you?

**12:7-10:** Why did God not answer His prayer for healing? What was God's bigger purpose, and how did Paul respond when he understood God's purpose in his afflictions?

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH:** It is not surprising that there is emphasis on growth in this book, because TRIALS and GROWTH are companions.

**3:17-18:** What is the Spirit of God really doing in our lives? What is His goal as He transforms us?

**2:1-11:** It seems that someone had been through a form of "church discipline." This may be referring to the situation Paul mentioned in 1Corinthians 5:1-8. In any case, how was the discipline effective in restoring the fallen individual? What was Paul's advice at this point?

**7:8-11:** What is the difference between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of the world?"