

2 Corinthians

Cracked Pots and Crazy Love

Week One

This week and for the next two weeks we'll focus on the **Observe** stage of Bible Study. We'll start by reading and asking "What do I see?" First, skim the whole Book of 2 Corinthians in one sitting and answer a few questions about what you saw. Then, read the focus passage for the week. Finally, you'll practice two skills that will help you really see what the passage says.

Mark up the passage. We've printed out the passage for you to make it easy. Marking the passage can help you focus and really see what's written. The following are suggestions on what/how to mark, but feel free to use any method that works for you.

1. **Highlight** anything that's repeated often. You can usually skip words like "a, an, the, he, she, it..."
2. **Underline** any commands, warnings, or promises.
3. **Box** words that link one thought to another. For example:
 - "and & likewise" show a comparison
 - "or & but" show a contrast
 - "therefore & so that" show a result of something
 - "because & since" show a reason for something
4. Add arrows, lines, etc. to show words and phrases that are linked together. Make a note to indicate what the link is.
5. Note lists by numbering the items in them. 1...2...3...4...
6. **Circle** key terms. These are words that seem important or "key" to the meaning of the passage. They point to the main idea being stated.
7. Create your own symbols. A heart might indicate emotion. A triangle, a name of God.
8. If you have a question about what something means, note it with a question mark--?

Write one observation for each verse. Work your way through the passage a verse at a time, listing whatever you observe. When you see something, add it to your list. We left a wide margin to the right of the passage for this list. Relax and remember; no detail is too small or too obvious. Questions (like, "What does this word mean?") count as observations.

Before you stop, **Make it Practical**. The Bible says, "...don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves." (James 1:22, NLT) The final step in any Bible Study is to apply it in our lives. In other words, we must answer the question, "How does this work for me?" Many people have found it helpful to use the acronym, **SPECK**, as a guide. When we **SPECK** a passage we ask ourselves, is there...

- S**- a SIN to avoid or repent?
- P**- a PROMISE to claim?
- E**- an EXAMPLE to follow?
- C**- a COMMAND to obey?
- K**- KNOWLEDGE of God to believe?

If this seems like a lot to take in, remember we'll be practicing these things for the rest of our study. And everything gets easier with practice. We're all in this together. Do what you can, and come back next week ready to share with your small group.

Week One Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

Skim over the Book of 2 Corinthians, straight through, in one sitting.

You will notice that this is a letter from Paul and Timothy to the church in Corinth. As you read, jot down your impressions. The following are things you can look for:

What seems to be the reason for the letter?

What do you think of Paul's tone as he writes?

How would you describe Paul's relationship with this church?

What are some topics Paul brings up?

Pray...Read...Mark up the passage...List one observation per verse.

2 Corinthians 1:3-2:11(NIV)

Observations

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. ⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹ Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

¹² Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. ¹³ For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, ¹⁴ as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁵ Because I was confident of this, I planned to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. ¹⁶ I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷ When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

¹⁸ But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." ²⁰ For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. ²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

²³ I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 Corinthians 2

¹ So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. ² For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? ³ I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. ⁴ For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

⁵ If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. ⁶ The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. ⁷ Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹ The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰ If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Apply (How Does it WORK?)

Make it practical. Now that you have spent some time looking in detail at God's Word, don't stop! Ask yourself, "How does this work...in general...and for ME?" You may find it helpful to look for...

S—a SIN to avoid

P—a PROMISE to claim

E—an EXAMPLE to follow

C—a COMMAND to obey

K—KNOWLEDGE of God to believe

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