

2 Corinthians

Cracked Pots and Crazy Love

Week Four

How were those conversations with God last week? Communication can be tricky. We all communicate, all the time. And yet misunderstandings are common. Have you ever been talking to someone, asked them a question and got the answer, "I just TOLD you!" or, less harsh, "I was just about to tell you!" Or, maybe you've had a misunderstanding with someone because you were quoted out of context. "That IS what I said, but you had to hear the whole conversation. What I meant was..."

We see the same thing in Bible Study. If we look at a phrase or a sentence out of context we are likely to be confused by what we see. Or worse, we may jump to a conclusion about what it means without pausing to ask questions. That's why last week we focused on simply recognizing words or phrases that are unclear when we see them. We want to build the habit of asking questions instead of assuming WE KNOW the answers.

*This week we begin adding tools for answering the question, "What Does It MEAN?" In Inductive Bible Study we call this **the Interpret Stage**. The first tool we'll focus on is **Context**. Often, the questions we have about some detail of a passage we're studying are answered elsewhere in the book (in this case, 2 Corinthians). For that reason, we had you start this study by reading the whole book straight through—to give you a frame of reference for all the focus passages. This week, we'll have you scan it again, looking for answers to your questions. We think you'll be surprised at how many answers you find with this tool alone!*

Week Four Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

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

2 Corinthians 5:11-6:15 (NIV)

Observations

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³ If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of

reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Corinthians 6

¹ As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says,

"In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you."

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸ through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always

rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³ As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

“Lump and Label” ...Go back over the passage and look for 2-4 “lumps” of content that each express one idea. Give each “lump” a “label.” Try to make your labels as brief as possible.

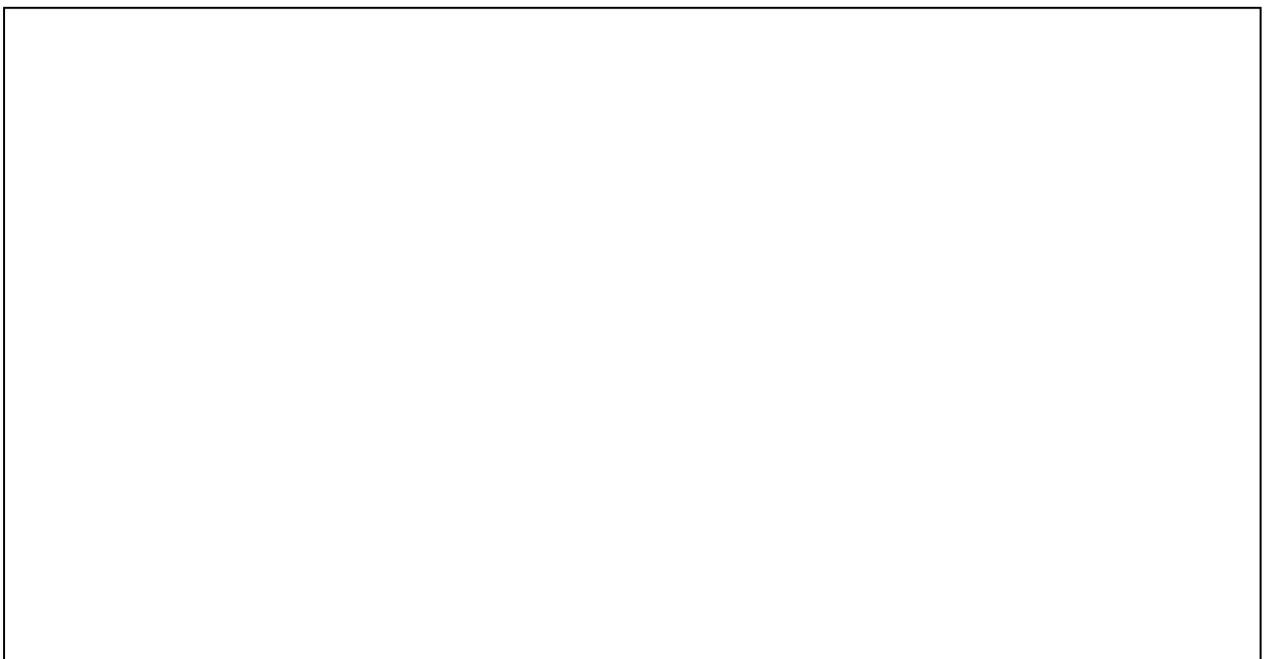
<i>Lump (verses)</i>	<i>Label</i>

List any questions you have about this passage.



Interpret (What Does it MEAN?)

Use Context to gain insight...Skim back over the whole book of Colossians. As you read look for things that explain the focus passage or answer any of your questions. Record what you find.



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

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is intended for the student to write their application of the text, identifying specific sins, promises, examples, commands, or knowledge of God.