

2 Corinthians

Cracked Pots and Crazy Love

Week Eight

A friend's Dad had an expression that she likes to quote. When her mom was telling a story, figuratively circling the subject...getting caught up in the details of who said what, and what happened next, and why, and all the implications of that... He would say, "Land the plane, JoAnn!" He meant, "OK, that's enough detail. Just give me the bottom line...sum it up for me."

*There comes a point in Bible Study that we have to "land the plane." We've closely observed a passage in detail and tried to explain what the details mean. Then, we need to step back from all those details and get to the bottom line, sum it all up. For some of us this is a challenge. We like details. We specialize in details. We're good at details. But there is value in seeing what all those details add up to. That's the final step in the Interpret Stage of Inductive Bible Study. We're calling it "**Sum It Up**." As briefly as we can manage, we summarize what the focus passage is all about. We're not going for a general, sweeping message here...just what the author's words communicated to his original readers. Here are a couple of examples:*

- *John 4:1-42* *Jesus has a life-changing conversation with a Samaritan woman.*
- *Philippians 2:1-5* *Paul urges the group unity that comes from individual humility.*

It's not too hard once you get the hang of it. But it may take a little practice. This week you might like to get some extra practice by going back over past weeks' focus passages and trying your hand at summing them up, too.

Week Eight Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

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

2 Corinthians 11:16-12:10 (NIV)

Observations

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. ¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. ¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! ²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or pushes himself forward or slaps you in the face. ²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

What anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. ²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was

shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. ³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. ³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

2 Corinthians 12

¹ I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—

God knows. ³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. ⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say.

⁷ To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

“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 your Interpretation Tools to gain insight...we have introduced several tools (listed below) to help us answer the "What does it mean?" questions. Use any that would be helpful to you.

- Context
- Dictionary
- Alternate translations
- Cross references

Record what you find.

Sum It Up...in one sentence, answer the question, "What was that about?" Stick to what the passage meant to the writer and his original readers. Don't generalize the message at this time.

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 instances of S, P, E, C, or K.