

## ***STUDYING THE BOOK OF 2 CORINTHIANS*** ***IN SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS***

### **Lesson 18 – Paul's Vision and His Thorn - 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

Read the following verses in the New International Version or a translation of your choice. Then discuss the questions that follow. Questions should be studied by each individual before your discussion group meets.

Materials may be copied and used for Bible study purposes. Not to be sold

2CO 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.

2CO 12:7 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.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **Lesson 18 – Paul's Vision and His Thorn - 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

215. Who was the man in Christ whom Paul described? (12:2)
216. Why did Paul tell the Corinthians about his vision, despite his misgivings? (12:2-4)
217. Why was Paul reluctant to speak about his vision? (12:3-6)
218. What happened during the revelation Paul described? (12:4)
219. Why did Paul refrain from boasting? (12:6)
220. For what reason might Paul have become conceited? (12:7)
221. What prevented Paul from developing a proud spirit? (12:7)
222. Why did Paul have a "thorn"? (12:7)

223. Who was responsible for giving Paul a "thorn in the flesh"? (12:7)

224. What was Paul's response to his "thorn"? (12:8, 10)

225. What purpose can suffering serve? (12:9)

### **Lesson 19 - Paul's Concern for the Corinthians - 2 Corinthians 12:11-21**

2CO 12:11 I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles," even though I am nothing. [12] The things that mark an apostle--signs, wonders and miracles--were done among you with great perseverance. [13] How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

2CO 12:14 Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. [15] So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less? [16] Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery! [17] Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent you? [18] I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not act in the same spirit and follow the same course?

2CO 12:19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. [20] For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder. [21] I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

#### **Lesson 19 - Paul's Concern for the Corinthians - 2 Corinthians 12:11-21**

226. How did Paul maintain humility while defending himself against his opponents at Corinth? (12:11)

227. What tone did Paul use in this passage? (12:11-13)

228. Why should the Corinthians have recognized the apostles? (12:12)

229. What did Paul want from the Corinthians? (12:14)

230. To what did Paul liken his relationship with the Corinthians? (12:14)

231. Why did Paul ask the Corinthians, "If I love you more, will you love me less?" (12:15)

232. How do we know that Paul had a deep affection for the Corinthians? (12:15-18)

233. Why was Paul's conscience clear about the men he had sent to Corinth? (12:17-18)

234. What prompted Paul to write this letter? (12:20-21)

235. In what ways did Paul fear that the Corinthians might cause him to be humbled before God? (12:21)