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*This is a self-study course
designed to help you discover
for yourself, from the Bible,
some important basic truths about
living the Christian life.*

how to study the lesson

1. Try to find a quiet spot free from distractions and noise.

2. Read the entire Scripture lesson; read it several times to help you absorb its content.

3. Read each question carefully. Then look up the Scripture reference given after each question. Make sure you have found the correct Scripture passage. For example, sometimes you may find yourself looking up JOHN 1:1 instead of I JOHN 1:1.

4. Answer the question from the appropriate Bible passage. Write, in your own words, a phrase or sentence to answer the question. In questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" always give the reason for your answer . . . "Yes, because. . ."

5. If possible, keep a dictionary handy in order to look up words you don't understand.

6. Pray for God's help. You *need* God's help in order to understand what you study in the Bible. PSALM 119:18 would be an appropriate verse for you to take to God in prayer.

7. *Class teachers using this course for group study will find some helpful suggestions on page 63.*

how to take the self-check tests

Each lesson is concluded with a test designed to help you evaluate what you have learned.

1. Review the lesson carefully in the light of the self-check test questions.

2. If there are any questions in the self-check test you cannot answer, perhaps you have written into your lesson the wrong answer from your Bible. Go over your work carefully to make sure you have filled in the blanks correctly.

3. When you think you are ready to take the self-check test, do so without looking up the answers.

4. Check your answers to the self-check test carefully with the answer key given on page 64.

5. If you have any questions wrong, your answer key will tell you where to find the correct answer in your lesson. Go back and locate the right answers. Learn by your mistakes!

apply what you have learned to your own life

In this connection, read carefully JAMES 1:22-25. It is only as you apply your lessons to your own life that you will really grow in grace and increase in the knowledge of God.

Introduction to II Corinthians

Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians demonstrates the apostle's deep concern for his converts. He gives his testimony of the comfort and confidence of God amid vast difficulties, and speaks of the glory of his ministry in Christ. The apostle also gives instruction in the grace of giving and vindicates his apostleship in the face of false teachers at Corinth. The letter was written in Macedonia, probably at Philippi, in the autumn of A.D. 56. The epistle divides into three main sections:

- I. The Confidence of the Apostle (Chapters 1–7)
- II. The Collection at Corinth (Chapters 8, 9)
- III. The Credentials of the Apostle (Chapters 10–13)



Confidence Through Difficulty

1:1-24

The salutation 1:1, 2

1. Why was Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ?

1:1; compare I CORINTHIANS 9:1 _____

The word *apostle* means “a sent one.” Corinth was located in the province of Achaia.

2. What characteristics of God did the apostle wish the Corinthians to receive?

1:2 _____

The comfort of Paul delivered 1:3-11

Throughout II Corinthians, the apostle gives his testimony concerning what God has done for him. The faithfulness and comfort of God are displayed in every circumstance of life.

3. Who is the source of our comfort?

1:3; compare ROMANS 15:5 _____

4. When does God comfort us?

1:4 _____

The word *comfort* is in the present tense, which shows it is always available.

5. Why does God comfort us?

1:4 _____

6. By whom does our comfort (or consolation) abound?

1:5 _____

The Christian may suffer because of sin (HEBREWS 12:3-15) or because of fellowship in Christ's sufferings (verse 5; compare PHILIPPIANS 3:10 and I PETER 4:13). The purpose of this is to teach us things which we otherwise could not learn (I PETER 1:7).

7. For what two reasons may the believer be afflicted or comforted?

1:6 _____

8. What is true of those who suffer with Christ?

1:7 _____

9. In whom should one trust even in the face of death?

1:9 _____

The apostle does not mention what the affliction was in Asia (verse 8), but he does indicate its severity.

10. Who delivered Paul from physical death?

1:9, 10 _____

Certainly if God is able to raise the dead, even Christ Himself, He is able to take care of every circumstance of life.

11. In what important way did the Corinthian believers help the apostle?

1:11 _____

The gift was evidently Paul's deliverance (compare verse 8). Prayer was the means; deliverance was the result.

The sincerity of Paul displayed 1:12-14

12. By whose standards had the apostle conducted himself?

1:12 _____

The word *conversation* is better translated “conduct” or “behavior.”

13. What did Paul hope the church at Corinth would do with his writings?

1:13 _____

14. Who was the rejoicing of the Corinthians?

1:14 _____

15. When would the Corinthians be Paul’s rejoicing?

1:14; compare I CORINTHIANS 1:8 _____

The visit of Paul delayed 1:15-24

Because the apostle had changed his plans to visit Corinth, the Corinthians had thought he was fickle. Paul disproves this idea.

16. How many times had the apostle planned to visit Corinth?

1:15, 16 _____

17. What was Paul’s destination?

1:16 _____

18. For what purpose was he evidently accused?

1:17 _____

The word *flesh* means “selfish desire” and is a reference to the old sin nature.

19. What was Paul’s real purpose in life?

I CORINTHIANS 1:17; compare GALATIANS 1:11, 12 _____

20. By whose faithfulness was it guaranteed that there was no duplicity in Paul?

1:18 _____

21. Of whom did Paul preach in Corinth?

1:19; compare I CORINTHIANS 1:23 _____

22. Who else preached in Corinth?

1:19 _____

23. In whom are the promises of God found true?

1:20 _____

Paul is saying that since there is no duplicity in God, and since God's promises are fulfilled in Christ and in the ones He uses, there was no duplicity in him. Thus Paul was not fickle as the Corinthians had said he was.

24. Who anointed Paul?

1:21 _____

The word *anoint* is used in the sense of *apply*, as oil (a type of the Holy Spirit) may be applied. Anointing emphasizes the initial part of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (compare I JOHN 2:27).

25. Who has sealed the believer?

1:21, 22; compare EPHESIANS 4:30 _____

26. Who possesses the earnest of the Holy Spirit?

1:22; compare EPHESIANS 1:13, 14 _____

A seal signifies ownership. The earnest is not just a pledge, but rather a down payment or first installment of what is to come. The Holy Spirit is not just a pledge, but rather a part of the full inheritance we shall possess. He, too, is the seal or mark of ownership that God possesses us forever (EPHESIANS 4:30).

27. Why, then, did Paul not go to Corinth?

1:23 _____

28. How did Paul refer to his service toward the Corinthians?

1:24 _____

check-up time No. 1

You have just studied some important truths about having confidence through difficulty. Review your study by rereading the questions and your written answers. If you aren't sure of an answer, reread the Scripture portion given to see if you can find the answer. Then take this test to see how well you understand important truths you have studied.

In the right-hand margin write "True" or "False" after each of the following statements.

1. Paul was an apostle by the will of God. _____
2. The apostle Paul was the source of his own comfort. _____
3. The Christian may suffer only because of sin in his life. _____
4. Paul was sentenced to death. _____
5. Believers are to trust in God, not in themselves. _____
6. The Corinthians did something to help Paul. _____
7. Paul used his own wisdom to rule his behavior. _____
8. Silvanus (Silas) and Timotheus (Timothy) preached at Corinth. _____
9. An earnest is just a pledge. _____
10. Paul was a helper to the Corinthians. _____

Turn to page 64 and check your answers.