

Gary Millar

2 Corinthians

The Gospel in All of Life



 7-Session Bible Study

Gary Millar

2 Corinthians

The Gospel in All of Life



✔ 7-Session Bible Study



2 Corinthians For You

These studies are adapted from *2 Corinthians For You*.

If you are reading *2 Corinthians For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *2 Corinthians For You*:

Study One > Ch 1-2

Study Five > Ch 8

Study Two > Ch 3-4

Study Six > Ch 9-10

Study Three > Ch 5

Study Seven > Ch 10-11

Study Four > Ch 6-7

Find out more about *2 Corinthians For You* at:

www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

2 Corinthians: The Gospel in All of Life

A Good Book Guide

© Gary Millar/The Good Book Company, 2021.

This edition printed 2025.

Published by The Good Book Company

thegoodbook.com | thegoodbook.co.uk

thegoodbook.com.au | thegoodbook.co.nz

The Good Book Company logo, featuring a stylized bird icon above the text "the good book" in a lowercase sans-serif font, with "COMPANY" in a smaller, uppercase sans-serif font below it.

Unless indicated, all Scripture references are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 2011 Biblica. Used by permission.

Gary Millar has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as author of this work.

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by André Parker and Drew McCall

ISBN: 9781802541496 | JOB 008234 | Printed in India

Contents

Introduction	4
Why Study 2 Corinthians?	5
1. Beginning with God <i>2 Corinthians 1 – 2</i>	7
2. The Gospel That Changes Us <i>2 Corinthians 3 – 4</i>	13
3. Seeing the Gospel <i>2 Corinthians 5</i>	19
4. Be Happy <i>2 Corinthians 6 – 7</i>	25
5. Give like a Macedonian <i>2 Corinthians 8 – 9</i>	31
6. The Boasting Apostle <i>2 Corinthians 10 – 11</i>	35
7. Visions and Values <i>2 Corinthians 12 – 13</i>	41
Leader's Guide	47
Map of the Eastern Mediterranean	77



Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God's word as "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we've discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They're perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let's take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you're invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you've seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven't got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you'll find a **Leader's Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God's light-giving word.

Why Study 2 Corinthians?

Corinth was the ancient world's equivalent of a modern, thriving, multicultural city. When Paul showed up in Corinth for the first time, he found a city with a Roman face, a Greek heart, a large Jewish minority and a deeply ingrained universal desire to impress. It's hardly a shock then that, when Paul preached the gospel and a church was born, life got pretty complicated. What else would you expect from a bunch of people who are mostly Greek following a suffering and dying Jewish Messiah in the middle of a Roman city which prides itself on always coming out on top. Welcome to the mess that is Corinth.

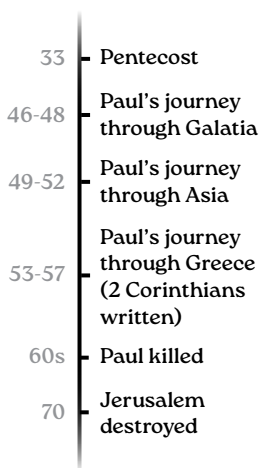
Now I know that church is always messy. I know that ministry is always more complicated than we first think. But it's also true that some places are more messy than others. And Corinth was one of those places. And Paul's relationship with the messy church he had planted in this complex city was... yes, you guessed it, *messy*.

Paul had a difficult relationship with the church he had planted. After he left, he had to write them numerous letters, some of them now lost. In them, he teaches, he rebukes, he reminds them of the basics that they had so quickly forgotten about. And then he had what he describes in 2 Corinthians 1 as "the painful visit". And at this point in their relationship, it's still not entirely clear whether the church will flourish and grow or crash and burn—which explains why this is the most passionate, honest, vulnerable, heartfelt letter in the Bible. The battle for hearts and minds is still on in Corinth. In particular, the leaders that Paul left behind continue to waver. So Paul writes in an attempt to persuade them to stick with him and the gospel.

That's why I think this letter is the place to go in the New Testament for a description and embodiment of what gospel ministry is all about. For Paul, gospel ministry is what we all do. It is walking with, speaking for, and serving Jesus in all of life. This letter is written for all of us. 2 Corinthians takes us through how to live by faith in our broken world. It's the key to embracing our weakness and living in the strength which God himself supplies.



2 Corinthians 55-57 AD



1

Beginning with God

2 Corinthians 1 - 2

Talkabout

1. Why do you think church can be such a messy and difficult environment for people? What common problems can destroy a church if they are left unaddressed?

Investigate

Paul is writing to a messy church with many problems in its leadership. In this passionate letter he is appealing to them to stick with him, and with the gospel message.

 **Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-2**

DICTIONARY

Apostle (v 1): someone chosen and sent by Jesus to teach and serve the Christian church.

Holy people or **saints** (v 1): people God sets apart for himself. Christians.

Achaia (v 1): southern Greece. (See map on page 77.)

Grace (v 2): God's gift of forgiveness to people who don't deserve it.

2. What do the opening two verses suggest are some of the issues that need to be addressed in Corinth?

3. Grace and peace are the twin marks of the local church, according to Paul. How does the gospel produce these key qualities?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Have you grasped the fact that the church belongs to God (v 1)?

Is that reflected in the way you speak about church, care about church, treat your brothers and sisters?

Investigate

 **Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11**

4. Who comforts whom in these verses? And why do they need to be comforted?
 - What aspects of God's character does Paul highlight here?

 - How should our view of God and suffering change in light of these truths?

Apply

5. What is the worst thing you have ever suffered? Did you experience the love and comfort of God as you were going through it?

- How are we able to show the love and comfort of God to others who are in distressing circumstances?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

Are you fearful about what may happen to you in the future—for example, your job and career, where you will live, finding a partner, your care in later life or if you become housebound or have dementia?

How will you exercise your trust in God for the future and what it may contain for you?

How might you use one or more of these verses to encourage someone who is currently going through trials?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

 **Read 2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:11**

- Why does Paul write so much to them about how his travel plans had changed, do you think?
- What comes out of this section about how trustworthy and accountable Christian leaders should be?

Investigate

 Read 2 Corinthians 2:12-17

DICTIONARY

Troas (v 12): see map on page 77.

Gospel (v 12): Greek word meaning "good news". The gospel is the good news about Jesus Christ.

Paul compares his life and work to a Roman triumphal procession, where the defeated captives are being led by the victor with incense burners.

6. Who leads this procession and what is the aroma they spread?

7. How do different groups respond to the smell of gospel ministry (v 15-16)?

8. How do Paul's motives for ministry differ from the other preachers (v 17)?

Apply

9. The Corinthians rejected Paul's authority and leadership because they thought him weak and unimpressive. What poor reasons might we use for not sitting humbly under those who teach us God's word?

Pray

Give thanks that you, both as an individual and as part of a church, have received the grace, peace and mercy of God.

Pray for those who you know are going through difficult times. Pray that you would be part of the way the Lord comforts them, and that God would be helping them to grow in their ability to help others.

Praise God for your church leaders, and ask him to help them become more trustworthy and reliable in their work.