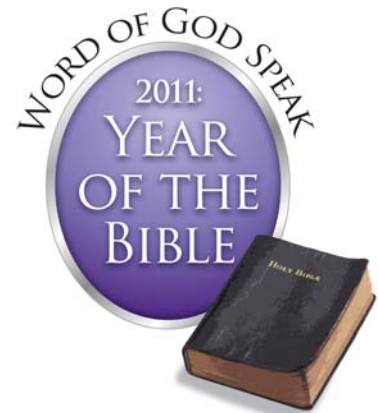


## Week 38: 1 Corinthians 14 – 2 Corinthians 9

### Study Guide for the week of September 19-25, 2011



#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with 2 Corinthians 9:6-8. In chapters 8 and 9 Paul teaches on the collection that he was making for the people who were suffering in Palestine because of a famine. What do you learn about being generous from these two chapters? See especially 9:6-8. What is your first reaction when you see the offering basket passed during worship or realize the topic of the sermon is about money? Have you ever felt pressured to give money to a charitable organization? Family? Church? Is the Church free to use pressure tactics or guilt when talking about tithes and offerings? What is Paul's answer in 9:6-8? According to verse 8, is wealth a blessing or a curse? You do feel wealthy? If so, do you experience your wealth as a blessing or a curse? What is the responsibility that comes with the blessing of wealth? (See also 1 Timothy 6:17-18) How would you evaluate yourself in this aspect of being a follower of Jesus? How generous are you with your money? What are some changes you would like to make in your thinking or behavior in regards to being generous with your money?

**Discussion starters** *If you are leading a small group, you may not have time for all of these questions. Pick the ones that will work best for your group.*

1. Ice Breaker Question: What is a gift or talent that you have that you would like to use more for God's purposes?
2. Was there something that jumped out at you, surprised you, encouraged you, or disturbed you from the readings this last week (or two)? Why?
3. 1 Corinthians 14 It is true that some people have reacted to the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues in such a way that churches have been split. There are whole denominations that came into being because of controversies over speaking in tongues. What do you think of this gift? What does Paul teach in this chapter about speaking in tongues? Do you think that speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift that we should all desire? If you have spoken in tongues, share what you have gained from your experience.
4. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 After dealing with several conflicts that had arisen in the Corinthian church, Paul comes back to the basic gospel in 15:1-8. This is like a creed. What are the faith statements in this creed? Do you think that it is important to have written statements of belief like our three ecumenical creeds (Apostles', Nicene, Athanasian)? Why? How are the creeds important to your journey of faith?
5. 1 Corinthians 15:12-57 This is Paul's most concentrated teaching on the resurrection. How does Paul link our resurrection and the resurrection of Christ (vss.12-23)? What are the events that Paul describes will happen at the end time (vss. 24-28)? How does Paul describe the kind of body we will have in the resurrection (vss.35-53)? What do you learn about your resurrection from this passage? How often do you think about what your resurrected life in heaven will be like? What do you imagine heaven will be like?
6. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Paul describes here how someone who has suffered a particular trouble can comfort others who are experiencing that same trouble. How have you seen this in your own life or in the lives of others?
7. 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 How bad did it get for Paul in Asia? What does Paul say is the purpose for the hardships he experienced in Asia? What was the meaning or purpose God brought to a hardship you experienced?
8. 2 Corinthians 1:18-20 The promises of God are all "Yes" in Christ. How do you understand this statement to be true? How is this truth evident in how you think and live your life?
9. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 How do you understand God, the Holy Spirit, living in you to be a "deposit guaranteeing what is to come?"

10. 2 Corinthians 3:16-17 How do you experience having the freedom that comes with knowing Jesus?
11. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 This one of the many passages in the New Testament that describes the challenges we face as followers of Jesus. Discipleship can be very hard at times. Paul clearly and poetically describes the hardships he faced and the sustaining blessings that can come with each hardship (e.g. perplexed, but not in despair). Go through each hardship-blessing combination in these verses and discuss what each means and how you see that the blessing can come out of that hardship. What is one hardship-blessing combination you have experienced because you follow Jesus? Read also 4:16-18 in this light.
12. 2 Corinthians 5:17 As you look at your life as a growing Christian, what are some of the “old” things that are now gone since you became “in Christ”? What is some of the “new” things that have come?
13. 2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1 What is this passage teaching regarding our relationships with unbelievers? How do you find the balance between being in authentic relationships with unbelievers but not being overly influenced by them? See also John 15:19.
14. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 What is the difference between “Godly sorrow” and “worldly sorrow”? How does Godly sorrow bring life and worldly sorrow bring death? How have you experienced each in your life?

## **Bible verse to memorize: 2 Corinthians 5:17**

### **Caring Time**

It is important to make time in your group to care for each other. Sometimes that happens during the discussion and sometimes it is best to end your time together praying for each other. Building off of question #7 above, one possibility this week would be to pray for each other in the light of this question:

**What is a hardship, loss, or trouble that you are facing where you are still waiting for God to bring meaning and purpose from that hardship, loss, or trouble?**

After everyone has shared go into a time of prayer having the person sitting to your right pray for you in regards to your answer to the question.

Also encourage people in the group to get together outside of the group time to foster deeper friendships with each other. Remember that being in a small group is primarily about sharing life together. It has been said that the most important time in small groups is the time people connect outside of the meeting time.