

2 Corinthians

Lesson #16, Chapter 12:1-21

Prepare your heart for this lesson through prayer and reading chapters 11 and 12.

1. Who is Paul addressing in Chapter 12?
2. What is Paul's purpose in writing as he does in Chapters 11 and 12? See 11:12 and 12:19.
3. What does Paul boast about in Chapter 11?
4. After reviewing Chapter 11, please answer why Paul says in 12:1 that boasting is necessary, though not profitable.
5. In 12:1-10 Paul continues with his boasting. What does he boast about in these verses?
6. Who is the man Paul is talking about in verses 2-4? For a hint, keep reading to verses 7-9.
7. What happened to that man in verses 2-4?

8. What is the purpose of Paul's thorn in the flesh according to verse 7?

9. The phrase "messenger of Satan" has had many interpretations assigned to it. Yet we can discover what this phrase means when we examine every occurrence of the word *messenger* (*angelos*), which appears 186 times in the New Testament. The basic meaning is "a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God." In every occurrence, it is used of a messenger, whether angelic or human. Thinking back over the chapters we've studied, especially Chapters 10-13, who might fit the description of someone angelic or human who might be used to afflict Paul?

10. Initially, how did Paul deal with his thorn in the flesh (12:8)?

11. What is God's response to Paul's petition (12:9)?

12. How does Paul respond to God's answer (12:9-10)?

13. How do you respond in times of weakness, distress, persecution, and difficulty?

14. Not only is Paul content, but he is also *well* content with weakness. Why? How can you grow to be well content in your weaknesses and difficulties?

15. How does knowing weakness' purpose help you to be content in the midst of it according to verses 9-10?

16. In Chapters 11 and 12 Paul defends himself about not being a burden to the Corinthian church (see 11:7-9 and 12:13-18). What are the issues surrounding this controversy?

17. In not being a financial burden to the church Paul was exercising a freedom he did not need to make. What do you learn from 1 Cor. 9:3-18?

18. Why does Paul choose the path that he does (see again 11:7-9 and 12:13-18)? For further insight read 2 Thess. 3:7-11, what other reason is given there?

19. What do you learn about Titus in verse 18?

20. Paul concludes his boasting section in 12:19-21. How has his boasting been for the Corinthians' up-building?

21. What does Paul fear about his third visit to Corinth (12:20-21)?

22. What is Paul's great motivation and longing as manifested in this chapter? How does Paul's example encourage and motivate you to build up others in the faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ?

A contented Christian is like the chamomile, the more it is trodden, the more it grows.

A contented spirit is a cheerful spirit. Contentment is something more than patience; for patience denotes only submission, contentment denotes cheerfulness.

A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath his heart screwed up to thankfulness; others will bless God for prosperity, he blesseth Him for affliction.

– Thomas Watson