Anchored to Stand

**STUDIES IN SECOND CORINTHIANS**

***…it is by faith you stand firm***

***II Corinthians 1:24***

Welcome to the Steps of Faith Bible Study! We are so excited that you have joined us and can’t wait to see what the Lord will do in our hearts this year.

There couldn’t be a more perfect time for us to study the Book of II Corinthians! Surely we are living in the last days. The world around us is becoming more and more tolerant of sin and less accepting of anyone who is willing to take a stand upon the Word of God. Christianity is viewed as “extreme” while immorality is considered “normal”. We could easily become distressed or even depressed, but that is not what the Lord wants us to do. We are still called to be a light in the darkness and to take a stand (even if the world is against us)! There is still work to be done as many of those around us do not have hope. They do not know Jesus.

Through our study of II Corinthians we will learn that we are *the fragrance of Christ*, we are *a living epistle*, and we are all called to participate in the *ministry of* *reconciliation* (helping those who are in darkness to be reconciled to God). Isn’t this marvelous? Consider that we will not be left to do this on our own. We have the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to direct our every step. We will learn how to *walk by faith and not by sight*, with a reminder that it is faith that enables us to stand firm.

 We have chosen to use the anchor as our symbol this year. Anchors represent stability and provide protection during storms. Also, the anchor keeps a boat from slowly drifting away and carried away with the current. We do not want this to happen to us! We want to remain anchored in Jesus. Yes, this world is getting wicked, but we won’t despair. We have the blessed hope that one day we will be with the Lord. Hebrews 6:19 encourages us that this *hope serves as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast*. We won’t be destroyed when the storms of life come our way; we will be safe from slowly drifting away because we are *anchored to stand*! Hallelujah!

Consider these words from D.L. Moody – *The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives. We must never forget that the ultimate goal of Bible study, inductive or otherwise, is to know God.*

Our goal for Bible study this year will be on transformation, not just information. We will place more of our emphasis on application, which asks this question:  *How does the truth of this passage apply to my own life?* It is through the application of God’s Word that we will gain wisdom, not just knowledge.

Charles Spurgeon stated that *wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal, and are all the greater fools for it. There is no fool so great a fool as a knowing fool. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.* *.*

**Background Information to Consider:**

The apostle Paul, the author of II Corinthians, served as a sort of *spiritual father* to the believers in Corinth. Having planted the church and lived with them for a year and a half, perhaps some of the Christians had put too much emphasis on Paul’s leadership rather than on Jesus Christ Himself. They were having some struggles with carnality and legalism in the church and wanted Paul to come visit to help fix the problems. Since Paul could not be there physically, he wrote letters to them providing wisdom and guidance. Paul’s ultimate goal, as any loving parent, was that the believers there would remove the training wheels (so to speak) and begin to *stand* in Christ on their own.

Below is a map of Corinth and includes the region mentioned in this letter, Achaia:

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Anchored to Stand

**STUDIES IN SECOND CORINTHIANS**

**Lesson 1**

**II Corinthians 1:1-11**

***Standing Delivered***

***Our God Delivered, He Does Deliver, and He Will Continue to Deliver (II Corinthians 1:10)***

We all encounter various trials at one time or another. In fact, as you are reading this you are most likely in one of three places. You are either on your way out of a trial, on your way into a new trial, or you are right smack dab in the middle of one right now. Jesus knew all about this. Just before He was to be crucified, He warned His disciples that living for Him, in this world, would not always be easy.

According to John 16:33 Jesus said, *in this world you will have tribulation;* *but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*.” Notice how He doesn’t say we *might* have tribulation, but he assures us that we most certainly *will*. Many of us struggle in our times of trial because we have the tendency to focus all of our attention on ourselves and onto our problems. No wonder we are depressed at times! Why do we forget that Jesus said, *be of good cheer*? Have you ever wondered if it’s even possible to have joy in the midst of pain?

Paul is going to address this very issue throughout our study of II Corinthians as he encourages us to take our eyes off of ourselves and fix them upon *the God of all Comfort* who has overcome the world. The result will be a renewed *hope*, both sure and steadfast, that will be our soul’s ***anchor*** in times of trial.

## First Day Overview: Read II Corinthians 1:1-11

1. This is known as Paul’s personal letter filled with details of immense pain, yet completely saturated with encouragement. Let’s make it personal for us, too, by reading this letter as if Paul is writing directly to us. With that in mind, read through this week’s verses and write down a word or phrase that personally encourages you. ­­­­­
2. Paul uses a variation of words, or synonyms, that describe tribulation. Write down as many as you find throughout verses 1-11:
3. Count the number of times you see the words consolation or comfort in verses 1-11?
4. This week’s text contains two words that are in sharp contrast to one another: *tribulation* and *comfort*. The word *tribulation*, as when Jesus said, “in this world you will have tribulation”, is far deeper than mere physical sufferings; it is the Greek word *thlipsis*, which speaks of distress, oppression, a pressing, pressure, or affliction. *Comfort and consolation*, as seen in our text, both come from the Greek word *parakaleo*, which is the same exact word that the Bible uses for the Holy Spirit. So Paul is essentially saying that we are never alone in our tribulations. The Holy Spirit will be with us!
	1. Share how this ministers to you today:
	2. Jesus was speaking to the disciples, in the Upper Room, just before His crucifixion. He was about to experience worst tribulation we could possibly imagine. He knew the disciples would abandon Him, yet Jesus knew He wouldn’t be alone. Read John 16:32 and share your thoughts:
5. Scan this week’s verses once more and look for the words that refer to God either as Father or as Jesus. Make a list of what you discover about Him. Example: (1) He has a will

**Anchored In**-Journal your thoughts. Just as Paul began his letter giving praise and thanks to God, take a few moments and do the same. Include some of the things you learned or were reminded of in today’s study.

Example: Thank you, Lord, that you have a will for my life. I can trust you.

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**SECOND DAY: Read 2 Corinthians 1:1-2**

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God*… Thus begins what is commonly known as the second letter of Paul to the church at Corinth.

1. Here we see Paul claimed the respected title of ***apostle***. By whose will did Paul claim this position? ­­­­­
	1. In Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, he explained the different functions, gifts, and ministries God gives to each believer. Paul was confident about his calling as an apostle. Do you know what God’s calling and will is regarding your gifts and function as a believer? Share your thoughts:
	2. How would/does knowing your function is God’s will affect the way you walk in it?
2. Verse 1:1 reveals that Timothy was with Paul when he wrote this letter. Use the following verses to write a brief profile on Timothy: Acts 16:1; II Timothy 1:2&5; I Corinthians 4:17
3. According to II Corinthians 1:1b, Paul is writing to the church at Corinth and all the saints who are in Achaia (the broader regional area) We know that Paul founded and established this church, yet in verse 1 he described it as the church of God. What does this tell you about:
	1. Paul
	2. The Church
4. In verse 2, Paul wishes the recipients *grace* and *peace*. Who does he say is our source of *grace* and *peace*? .
	1. Why is grace important to you personally?

b. Read Philippians 4:7. How is the *peace of God* described in this verse?

1. Are you feeling anxious and in need of this kind of peace today? Go back to Philippians chapter 4 and read verse 6. Underline or highlight this verse in your Bible and then write it out in the spaces below:

*Be anxious for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_but in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by*

*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ let your requests*

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In other words, instead of worrying about our problems, we should pray about them. Prayer is simply talking to God. As He speaks to us through His Word (the Bible) we should respond to Him through prayer. Some of us like to pray quietly to ourselves, while others of us enjoy talking to God through journaling. The “Anchored In” section of our study gives you the opportunity to respond to God. Use space provided below, or your own journal.

**Anchored in**; with today’s lesson in mind, Thank the Lord that He has a will for your life. If you are unsure what His will is, ask Him to reveal it to you. If you are anxious and in need of peace, let your requests be known to God.

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***Grace, grace, God’s grace; Grace that will pardon and cleanse within***

***Grace, grace, God’s grace; Grace that is greater than all our sin!***

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**THIRD DAY: Read II Corinthians 1:3-7**

*“Look around you, be distressed; Look inside you, be depressed; Look to Jesus, be at rest” Corrie TenBoom*

1. Today’s portion of scripture has been a great source of encouragement and strength for Christians in difficult times. May you be encouraged, too!
	1. Begin today’s lesson by copying II Corinthians 1:3 here:
	2. In verse 3 the word mercies can be translated *compassions*. What do you learn about mercy and compassion from Lamentations 3:22, 23?
2. According to verse 4 of our text, God comforts us in our tribulations! Not a few, not some, not most, but ALL! What is your response to that truth?
	1. One reason God comforts us is that we might comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. Has the Lord ever used your experience in a trial to bring comfort to another?
	2. What qualities are developed through suffering that enable us to comfort others?
3. Read II Corinthians 1:5-7. *Suffering* and *consolation* are words that are extreme opposites, yet go hand-in-hand. Paul gives assurance saying, if you are a partaker of the *sufferings*, then you will partake of the *consolation*. In other words, the Holy Spirit will be with you when you suffer. How does this assure you and keep you from fearing hard times?
4. Verses 6 and 7 reveal Paul’s heart of love and compassion for the people he serves. He endures suffering knowing others will benefit from what He has learned. It’s true, whether we intend it or not, as Christians, people are watching the way we respond to trials.
	1. Why does suffering lead some people to become encouragers and other people to become bitter and numb?
	2. Let’s use Jesus as our example of suffering well. Read Hebrews 12:1-2. Notice it says that He despised the shame, yet endured the cross.

* + 1. What was His motivation for enduring the cross?
		2. What do you think the *joy* mentioned here refers to?

 **Anchored In** – Praise God for his mercy and for promising to comfort us in our afflictions. Consider your current responses to the trials in your own life and ask the Lord enable you to be a good witness to others in spite of your circumstances. We want to be more like Jesus!

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***Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,***

***I will fear no evil; for you are with me;***

***Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me* – Psalm 23:4**

**FOURTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 1:8-9**

In today’s verses, we will get our very first glimpse into Paul’s affliction. He will show us, from a personal experience, that his words are not just ideas, but are proven facts. Paul was practicing what he was preaching – relying upon the God of all comfort in his own personal trials.

1. II Corinthians 1:8 Paul uses strong words to describe the severity of his suffering in Asia. Think about the depth of Paul’s trouble as you fill in the blanks below:

*we were burdened \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ measure, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ strength, so*

*that we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ even of life.*

1. Although we do not know the exact nature of this trouble, Paul’s sufferings were bad enough that he thought he might die. Paul does, however, reveal the purpose for his suffering in II Corinthians 1:9.
	1. Why did God allow these circumstances in Paul’s life? (verse 9b)
	2. What does Psalm 118:8 say about this?
		* 1. Fractured relationships, personal heartaches, natural disasters, physical illness, financial troubles, etc… These all have a way of bringing us to a place where we must place our trust in Christ alone. Can you recall a time when the Lord used a trial to build your confidence in Him?

Alan Redpath said this: “*God has one great purpose for His people above everything else: it is to destroy in us forever any possible confidence in the flesh; it is to bring us to the place where self-confidence has passed into history and has been exchanged for a confidence in God, who raises the dead.”*

 **Anchored in** – Examine yourself. Are you still placing too much confidence in your own abilities? Is there an area of your life that you are holding back or holding onto? Ask the Lord to search your heart and reveal anything that needs to be surrendered. One more thing…. as you write, remember how much Jesus loves you and wants the very best for your life. You can trust Him!

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***My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.***

***I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly trust in Jesus’ name.***

***Christ alone; Cornerstone.***

***Weak made strong in the Savior’s love.***

***Through the storm He is Lord – Lord of all***



**FIFTH DAY: Read II Corinthians 1:10-11**

1. Read verse 1:10. Paul, very confidently, declares that God’s deliverance applies to the past, present, and future.
	1. Make it personal by replacing the pronouns *us* and *we* with your name.
	2. How does this minister to you?
2. One of the most glorious things about our God is that He never changes! We can trust him completely. Use the verses below to help you understand the unchanging nature of the Lord. What stands out to you?
	1. Hebrews 13:8
	2. Malachi 3:6
	3. Revelation 1:8
3. Paul knew the value of intercessory prayer and was not shy about asking for it. Use the following verses to gain insight to Paul’s very specific prayer requests:
	1. II Thessalonians 3:1:
	2. Colossians 4:3:
	3. Galatians 6:2:

…*without prayer, I am a miserable, obnoxious wretch unless I spend time communing with the Lord. Now I might be all right for a few days and be sunny and nice to people in my life…but beyond that, I cannot do it. Without prayer I am nothing of what God wants me to be. And neither are you.* – Kay Smith

1. Did you know what Jesus was doing just prior to his arrest and crucifixion? He was praying for us. Read John chapter 17. Verses 20-26 are specific to us, but the entire chapter is worth reading. Remember, Jesus knew what He was about to suffer, yet He took the time to pray for us. Selah – pause and think about it.

 **Anchored In** – If taking the time to pray for others was important to Jesus, it should be important to us. Take some time to quiet yourself before the Lord. Ask Him to direct you and show you who is in need of prayer. Be as specific as you can. Let’s become women who really *bear one another’s burdens!*

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Are you in need of prayer this week? Consider sharing your request with your small group and be prepared to make note of other’s requests. Let’s commit to praying for one another more this year.

***"Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to be made into a burden."***

***-* Corrie Ten Boom**

**SIXTH DAY: STAND - Delivered to Stand – From Saul to Paul**

…*we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us* – II Corinthians 1:9-10

1. Before he was the apostle Paul, the writer of II Corinthians was known as Saul of Tarsus. He had a reputation for persecuting Christians. You could say that Saul was dead in his sin and trespasses. We know from Acts 7:58 that Saul was there when Stephen was martyred. Acts 8:1 adds that Saul was consenting to his (Stephen’s) death. He was on his way to Damascus (where he was planning to persecute the Christians) when the Lord Himself appeared to him.. Read Acts 9:3-23 to see Saul’s transformation from the *persecutor* to the *persecuted*. What do you see?
2. Although scripture does not tell us if it was God who changed his name, or if Paul himself did, we do know that Saul and Paul are one in the same. The Greek translation of the name *Paul* is *small.* Look up these verses to help you understand Paul’s opinion of himself. Write down what you learn:
	1. I Timothy 1:15
	2. I Corinthians 15:9
3. Turn your attention back to Saul’s conversion. Many of us are too timid or unsure when we come to faith in Jesus. We think we need to be Christians for years before we can witness to others and take a stand. Notice how long it to Saul to stand for Jesus. Copy the words of Acts 9:20 here:
	1. How does this encourage you to take a *stand* in your own faith?
4. Let’s take a few moments to reflect upon our own transformation as you answer these questions: Has God delivered you out of the darkness? Has there been a change in your heart as evidenced in your lifestyle? Have you become a new creation in Christ?

***…if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;***

***old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new***

**II Corinthians 5:17**

**Anchored in** – Write a brief testimony in the space below and then take some time to praise and thank the Lord for transforming you and delivering you. .

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***This is amazing grace, This is unfailing love***

***That You would take my place, That You would bear my cross***

***You laid down Your life That I would be set free***

***Oh, Jesus, I sing for***

***All that You've done for me***

