



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of March 12, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

II Corinthians 1:23-2:11, "Forgive"

²³ But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. ²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

¹ For I made up my mind not to make another painful visit to you. ² For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? ³ And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. ⁴ For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

⁵ Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. ⁶ For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, ⁷ so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸ So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹ For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰ Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, ¹¹ so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

- Why is it so hard to forgive others and see relationships restored?
- **Read vv23-24.** Paul continues to defend his change of plans in not coming to visit the Corinthians. What reason & goals does Paul now give for his change of plans?
- **Read vv1-2.** Paul remembers a past visit and gives yet another reason for not returning to visit the Corinthians. What is that reason?
- **Read vv3-4.** Paul references a past letter sent to the Corinthian church. Why did he write that letter? With what did he struggle in writing that letter?
- **Read vv5-11.** What trouble was occurring in the fellowship at Corinth since Paul's prior letter was received?
 - How does Paul affirm his love for the church? For the offender?
 - What is something we learn about the nature and purpose Christian fellowship? Of church discipline?
 - How could the continuation of church discipline result in being "outwitted by Satan" (11)?
- Have you been withholding forgiveness? Slow to love? Undone by the pain relationship or excessive sorrow for your offenses? Outwitted by Satan? Pray for one another. See how Jesus has forgiven you and loves His Church. Pray for the peace and purity of our church & God's Church.

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on *II Corinthians 1:23-2:11*

- Paul explains here in this section why he had said he would visit the Corinthian church and why he had not: “it was to spare you “ (23)
- All of this work Paul has done and is doing is for the joy of the church (24) and to let them know the “abundant love” (4) that he has for them.
- So instead of coming Paul writes a letter to them.
- “Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.” ([II Corinthians 7:5-16](#))
- Then as Paul thinks of the difficulty and pain he urges the Corinthians to restore an offender.
- There was someone in the church who had smeared Paul.
- We have wronged no one
- We have corrupted no one
- We have taken advantage of no one
- This person was apparently the ringleader in speaking poorly of Paul, Paul urged action in his “painful” letter, the Corinthians repented and acted in church discipline and now the time has come to restore the offender, (the pendulum has swung too far).
- Because this brokenness would give Satan an opportunity to further disrupt the church.
- Conclusions:
- We can never water down the claim of Christ upon the affections and behavior of His Bride. It wasn’t just Paul’s reputation at stake, but the Gospel and the joy of everyone involved.
- We must always pray and hope for the glory of God, the reputation of Christ, and true joy to be truly at stake when we rebuke.
- Joy, repentance and restoration are those ways in which we must most hope for the glory of God to be revealed in us.
- Who is my enemy?