

**Pray for your time together in God's Word!**

**Read the passage out loud as a group.** Option: Give the group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

**This Week's Passage**

**Scripture Reference**

*2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6 (NIV-- 2011)*

12 Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, 13 I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. 15 For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 16 To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? 17 Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. 3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4 Such confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. 6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

**Discussion**

**Ask the Group:** What about this passage stood out to you?

*Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them to specific discussion. Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate about personal understandings—keep it more on the "observation" level.*

**Ask the Group:** What does it mean to "minister" in people's lives?

*Possible Answers: Giving of your time, treasure, or "ticker" to someone; encouraging them in some way, being a "gospel" friend.*

- How have you seen God open doors for you or others you know to "minister" in people's lives?

*Leaders' Note: Share an opportunity that you have had to minister into someone's life.*

**Ask the Group:** What does it look like to live life having “the pleasing aroma of Christ?” (v. 15) or Optional: What is Paul talking about when he mentions, “the aroma of Christ?”

*Leaders’ Note: This note might be helpful background information-- “The imagery is that of a Roman triumph in which the victorious general would lead his soldiers and the captives they had taken in festive procession, while the people watched and applauded and the air was filled with the sweet smell released by the burning of spices in the streets. So the Christian, called to spiritual warfare, is triumphantly led by God in Christ, and it is through him that God spreads everywhere the ‘fragrance’ of the knowledge of Christ.” (From NIV Study Bible)*

**Ask the Group:** To whom would we, as Christians, be an “aroma that brings death” (v. 16)?

- Why might we be perceived in this way?

*Leaders’ Note: This is an opportunity to discuss how people perceive and respond to Christians and the Gospel in different ways. For example, some may feel you are pressing your beliefs on them or preaching a fire and brimstone message—to these people we may be “an aroma that brings death.” Whereas others are very receptive to Christianity and we become an “aroma that brings life.”*

**Ask the Group:** In vs. 16 Paul asks, "who is equal to such a task?" (The ESV version says "Who is sufficient for these things?") What are the things that hinder us from spreading the Gospel?

*Possible Answers: Not feeling competent, not having the correct words to say, etc.*

**Ask the Group:** What does it look like to “peddle the word of God for profit”? (v. 16)

- How can we as Christians avoid this in our lives?

*Possible Answers: Trying to use God to receive advances or benefits in life rather than following God purely to honor Him and give Him all the glory.*

**Ask the Group:** Re-read vs. 3. What was Paul trying to convey to the Corinthians when he states that they are letters written with the Spirit as opposed to with ink?

*Possible Answers: We know we are being effective by seeing the Holy Spirit working in our lives. Letters written in ink can only tell so much about a person, but actually witnessing the Holy Spirit move in people’s lives has a greater impact.*

### **Application**

**Ask the Group (small or large):** As you spread the “aroma of Christ” are you relying on your own ability?

- What are some ways you can rely on God this week as you minister to others?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Where in your life might God be opening doors for you to be the “aroma of Christ”?

*Suggestion: Send this application question and challenge out during the week to encourage your group.*

Last Week’s Application: (Discuss if time)

**Ask the Group (small or large):** The gospel has freed us from all areas of sin, allowing us to be in reconciliation with each other. What is an area in your life where you need to seek that freedom of forgiveness through Christ?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Are there any relationships in your life right now that need restoration?

- How can you seek reconciliation and restoration in both of these areas this week?