

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

2 Corinthians 7:2-15

New International Version (2011)

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. 4 I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

5 For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. 13 By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14 I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. 15 And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling.

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: In vs. 2-4, what does Paul say to reaffirm his feelings for the Corinthians?

Possible Answers: Paul is not writing to condemn them, he has room for them in his

heart, Paul's joy from them, he is comforted because of them, etc.

- **Ask the Group:** How does this connect with what he's said to them previously?
Possible Answers: (See 2:3) Wrote so his joy is their joy, (See 2:4) Didn't want to cause them pain, but that they would know his abundant love for them, etc.
- **Ask the Group:** What reason for comfort does he have now?
Possible Answers: Paul is comforted by God, but also through hearing from Titus about how the Corinthians are doing, and the comfort that Titus received.

Tell the Group: Even though Paul is currently comforted, in vs. 8 he acknowledges that his previous letter brought the Corinthians sorrow. This is the “sorrowful” letter that Paul had Titus deliver to the Corinthians.

Ask the Group: How does Paul feel about the effect the letter had on the Corinthians?
Possible Answers: He did not regret that it brought them sorrow because it led them to repentance. He was sad that it hurt them, but he knew it was only for a little while and it led them to repentance.

- **Ask the Group:** Like Paul, have you ever needed to speak the “truth in love,” to someone, even though you knew it might bring them sorrow?
- **Ask the Group:** How did you feel after speaking with them/receiving their response? *Leader's Note: This follow-up question should ideally be included in responses to the question above. If not, please prompt those sharing to connect their responses with that of Paul (similar/different, etc.) by using this one.*

Ask the Group: What does Paul say is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow?

Possible Answers: Godly sorrow leads to repentance, salvation without regret, while worldly sorrow leads to death and regret.

- **Ask the Group:** When we feel sorrow over sin, how do we know if we're feeling sorrow from God or from the world?
Possible Answers: When we feel worldly sorrow, it is the result of sin, shame, embarrassment, and guilt, and it brings no change. When we feel godly sorrow it leads to repentance and salvation, we ask God for help and he changes us.

Ask the Group: What effect does godly sorrow produce in the Corinthians?

Possible Answers: In vv. 10-11, godly sorrow brings repentance, leads to salvation, leaves no regret, it produces earnestness, eagerness to clear themselves, indignation, alarm, longing, concern, readiness to see justice done, etc.

Ask the Group: Because the Corinthians responded to Paul's letter with godly repentance, what effect did that have on their relationship with him?

Possible Answers: The Corinthians were grieved into changing. Paul's comforted by their repentance and everything that was boasted about before was true, have confidence in their obedience, etc. Paul is also encouraged by Titus's response due to their repentance (vv. 13-15).

Ask the Group: What effect does godly sorrow have on us?

Possible Answers: It makes us want to change, leads us to repentance, gives us hope and encouragement, etc.

- **Ask the Group:** What effect does it have on our relationships?

Application

Ask the Group (small or large): Are there any relationships in your life where you need to speak the “truth in love,” even though it may cause them sorrow?

Ask the Group (small or large): When convicted by sin this week, how can you respond like the Corinthians (as described in this passage)?

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): Think about the current relationships that you have with unbelievers.

- Are any of these relationships “yoked?”
- Are these relationships honoring to God?

Ask the Group (small or large): Do you view yourself as a person set apart for God?

- Do you think others see you this way? If not, what can you begin doing differently this week to show that you are set apart?