

2 CORINTHIANS READING PLAN WEEK 12



Our time was spent concluding chapter 11, reading through chapter 12, and moving into chapter 13. I will save the opening verses of chapter 13 for next week's review. Let's go over a few matters about our study this week.

Chapter 11:22-33

1. These verses outline Paul's background: Who he was, what he went through, and concern over the churches. Why do you think Paul felt he needed to remind the Corinthians of these matters?
2. Of all the things Paul went through in his ministry, what stands out to you in his list?

Chapter 12

1. Paul continues to share of his various experiences. He describes "a man" who went up to the 3rd heaven. Most believe this "man" was Paul. Why does he speak in the third person? Guzik pens, "Many might ask, what really happened to Paul? Was he carried up **in the body** to heaven, or did his spirit separate itself from his body and go there? The whole point of the passage is that if Paul didn't know, we can't know. In fact, Paul emphasizes the point by repeating the idea twice (in verse two and in verse three). Therefore, speculation at this point is useless. "As he could not decide himself, it would be ridiculous in us to attempt it." (Clarke)
2. The 3rd heaven: What is this? Some have speculated, as some Jewish Rabbis taught, that there were three levels in Heaven. Guzik writes a good explanation: "Instead, Paul is using terminology common in that day, which referred to the "blue sky" as the *first* heaven, the "starry sky" as the *second* heaven, and the place where God lived and reigned as the *third* heaven.

3. Paul not talking about his experience of seeing Heaven is a reminder: We do not need people who say they died and visited Heaven or Hell to be our source of truth about either. Scripture is our standard of truth, not someone's experiences. We can fully trust Scripture, we cannot fully trust "experiences."
4. Paul didn't want to come across as boasting as the "super-apostles" did. Instead, he speaks about his weaknesses. Why do you think he spoke about his weaknesses?
5. It is apparent Paul was frustrated with those in the church who did not value his leadership/calling. There were those who had fallen for people that Paul sarcastically called 'super-apostles'. Paul was bothered that these false apostles had taken advantage of the people and were followed. Paul In verse 13 says he took nothing from them. What in verse 13 is another sarcastic comment Paul makes?
6. Verse 14 - what is Paul's concern about?
7. Verses 19-21 - Paul wants to go back to Corinth. What do you see as his deep concern that he will find when he gets there?

Church life can have seasons of frustration. We must persevere through those times. Perseverance will come as we keep our eyes on Jesus and His word, not on the flaws of one another.