

Cell Group Bible Study 2 Corinthians Sermon Series 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the start of our church's sermon series and cell group bible study on 2 Corinthians! We will be embarking on this journey for 13 weeks based on the sermon series.

Why study 2 Corinthians passages?

1. To **encourage** us as his people to **trust** in God's leading in our lives, even through trials and sufferings. God is sovereign in all things and works in all circumstances for our good (Romans 8:28). We can commit all our ways to him with joy and thanksgiving.
2. To **spur** us on towards **authentic ministry** for Christ in his church. The work of his ministry takes place in every aspect of our lives, as soon as we acknowledge him as Lord and Saviour, to shine his light to the world through word and deed.
3. To **grow** in **fruitfulness** as God's specific will and leading for COA in 2024. By participating in this together, we can experience growing together and make this year one that is a most fruitful, meaningful and blessed one.

What is a suggested cell group and bible study format?

1. You can incorporate the elements of the **4 W's** for your cell meeting: **Welcome** (personal thanksgiving), **Worship** (songs), **Word** (bible study) and **Works** (prayer for each other and planning and participating in upcoming events of the church).
2. Each of the bible study will consist of three elements:
 - a. **Introductory question** for discussion (related to the focus of the bible study)
 - b. **Discussion question(s)** based on the passage
 - c. **Possible application(s)** in daily life
3. You may not need to include all of the elements in a single cell group session but do not neglect any of the **4 W's** over the long term.

What can be helpful for cell members to be more involved?

1. Everyone should try to **read the bible passage** beforehand or during the meeting.
2. Cell members can be **rostered** to lead in the various elements within the cell meeting: welcome, worship, bible study or prayer. This will help involve more members for the cell.
3. In smaller groups, cell members can **keep in touch** with one another about how they have been applying the lessons learnt in the sermon/bible study throughout the week.

What is helpful for you as a cell leader to have a fruitful meeting?

1. Start and end every meeting **on time**. This honours the commitment that all the cell members have made to attend cell on time.
2. Encourage **everyone** to share and thank them for sharing – there are no wrong answers (unless it contradicts what God says!) and each opinion should be valued.
3. Look to **affirm** what your members are sharing – especially about how God may be speaking or leading them in their lives.
4. Feel free to stop at any point to elaborate if the Spirit is leading you to – **you don't have to complete all of the discussion questions**.
5. Keep your cell group meeting and your members in **prayer** throughout the week.

2 Corinthians Bible Study (8 Sep)

#10 – Seal of Approval in Ministry

Big Idea – God gives us authority to build others up and not tear them down

Key Verse: *“For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.”* 2 Corinthians 10:8

A. Introductory Question

1. How do you deal with criticisms or rejections from others? Feel free to share with each other.

B. Discussion Questions [Read 2 Corinthians 10:1-18]

In this passage and from the sermon, we learnt that Paul constantly faced a group of determined opposers who persist in their rejection of Paul’s ministry and deny his authority as an apostle. Yet instead of defending himself and attacking his opponents vigorously, he begins by writing, *“I, Paul, myself **entreat** you, by the **meekness and gentleness of Christ... I beg of you...**”* (2 Cor 10:1-2).

2. What attitude does Paul adopt in response to the criticisms of his opponents? What impact does his reference to *“the meekness and gentleness of Christ”* have?

Paul, however, does not take the untruths lying still, especially against God. He warns that his weapons *“are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds”*, and that he will *“destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when (their) obedience is complete.”* (2 Cor 10:4-6).

3. What are the weapons of divine warfare that Paul refers to? How and in what arena are these weapons exercised? How do these weapons differ from the weapons used by Paul’s opponents?

Yet in his battle with his opponents, Paul never forgot the purpose and intent of the ministry God had entrusted to him. He reiterates that his authority was given to him by the Lord *“for building you up and not for destroying you”* (2 Cor 10:8). He never lost sight of his identity and mission as an apostle.

4. How does the purpose of Paul’s authority differ from his opponents? How can we tell if the authority exercised by a church leader is done in the right or wrong way?

C. Application

One of my greatest regrets has always been being too quick to respond to criticisms of others without thinking through what they are saying and where they have come from. I have learnt that it is good to **take some time** before responding to the disparaging remarks of others so that I am not too emotionally entangled when doing so and make things worse. More importantly, I learnt that using this time seek God’s wisdom and will for me is beneficial for my heart and my faith.

5. What can you learn from Paul (and from Christ) about how to respond to criticisms and accusations by others?

Paul’s battle was primarily with the Judaizers in the Corinthian church, but modern churches fight battles on multiple fronts. Not only are there internal skirmishes but external battles of public opinion. Every mistake or poor choice of words by a church leader is highlighted and applied to all Christians.

6. How important is the public image of the church? What are some of the unique challenges the church faces today with regards to social media? Can the local church win these battles?

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:8