



## Monday, December 5

Paul opened this letter to the Corinthians with a reminder of God's comfort and supernatural power in our lives. Paul's efforts to explain the change in his plans to visit them was intended to verify his credibility in ministry and the trustworthiness of his word. Paul longed for the Corinthian Christians to understand and appreciate the triumphant, grace-filled nature of faith in Jesus.

### 1 Corinthians 1-2

- According to Paul, what is the by product of God's comfort to us in times of troubles?
- Paul calls Christians to bring others the "aroma of Christ," which he also described as the "aroma that brings life." To whom can you bring this aroma?

## Tuesday, December 6

In biblical times, people kept valuables in plain clay jars so as not to attract the attention of potential thieves. Paul used the metaphor of clay jars to describe our earthly physical bodies that contain the supernatural life of Jesus. Though our human bodies will not last forever, our life in Christ will span eternity with God. For followers of Jesus, physical health may deteriorate, but spiritual health can always be renewed.

### 2 Corinthians 3-4

- What did Paul mean by a "letter...written on [human] hearts" (3:1-3)?
- Reread 4:16-18. What "light and momentary troubles" has God used to help you grow and mature in your faith? What encouragement do you find in today's Scripture reading?

## Wednesday, December 7

"Ministry of reconciliation" describes a crucial, mandatory responsibility of all Christians. If we have received reconciliation with God through the good news of Jesus and we have become "new creations in Christ," we have also become ambassadors of this message to others. Our human lives become instruments of a powerful, supernatural message, intended to bring all persons into transforming relationships with God through Christ.

### 2 Corinthians 5:1—6:2

- What specifically did Paul say was the "message of reconciliation: that believers are to share?"
- Verses 5:7-10 remind us that we will be held accountable for our actions on Christ's behalf. Of what would you be confident when standing before God? What would God want you to improve?

## Thursday, December 8

Second Corinthians offers the most extensive explanation of God's plans for generous giving in the entire New Testament. In 8:5-7, Paul pointed out how necessary it is for believers to give ourselves first to the Lord. Only then is the supernatural grace of giving possible through us. Over and over, Paul confirmed that generous giving is possible through us. (9:8).

### 2 Corinthians 8—9

- What does 8:12 teach about God's view of the amount we are capable of giving?
- Make a list of the principles about giving in these two chapters. Which of these are you already demonstrating? What do you need most to implement?