

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE

Eternal Future, Present Faith 2 Corinthians 5:1–10

“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.” 2 Corinthians 5:1

Day 1: Read 2 Corinthians 5:1–10.

1. What is the difference between a tent and a house? Which would you rather live in?
2. If “tent” represents the earthly body, what does the destruction of the tent represent?
3. What word does Paul use to describe our present body (our “tent”)? How does he describe our heavenly body (the “house”)? (cf. Phil. 3:20–21) Which sounds better?
4. Why do you think the image of the tent sprang to Paul’s mind? (Acts 18:1, 3)

Day 2: Read 2 Corinthians 5:1–5 and Romans 8:18–19, 22–26.

5. Why do we “groan” and feel “burdened” in our earthly bodies (2 Cor. 5:2, 4)? How is this groaning different from complaining? What virtue is it related to? (Rom. 8:24–25)
6. In verse 5, the Spirit is called a “deposit”; Romans 8:23 says that we have “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” In what way is the Holy Spirit a “deposit” or “firstfruits”? How is his presence in us connected with our groaning?
7. When you feel that life is unsatisfying or unfulfilling, how do you reassure yourself? According to these passages, will we ever attain complete fulfillment in this life?

Day 3: Read 2 Corinthians 5:1–10.

8. Why can we be “confident” (vs. 6; also translated, “courageous”) even now on earth? (Note the “therefore” at the beginning of vs. 6.)

9. Paul writes that “[w]e live by faith, not by sight” (vs. 7). What is it that we are unable to see now that requires faith? (cf. 1 Jn. 3:2)
10. For many of us, Paul’s statement in verse 8 is hard to relate to (see also Phil. 1:23). Why do you think this is so? How can we cultivate a longing like Paul’s?
11. When someone is going through a hard time, how do you encourage her? How often do you remind someone of the glorious heavenly future that awaits us as believers? How often does someone remind you? (Consider 1 Cor. 15:19)

Day 4: Read 2 Corinthians 5:6–10.

12. How does Hebrews 11:1 define faith?
13. On what does our faith rest? (1:20a; 1 Thess. 5:23–24) How is it demonstrated? (Gal. 5:6; Jms. 2:14–17; Skim Heb. 11.)
14. What do believers make their goal in life? How can we keep this goal before us each day as we do all the things that need doing?
15. What characterizes a life that is pleasing to God? (Rom. 12:1–2; Col. 3:2–17) Who brings these things about in us? (3:8–9, 17–18)

Day 5: Read 2 Corinthians 5:6–10.

16. Who does Paul say sits in the judgment seat?
17. Most commentators agree that the judgment spoken of in verse 10 is not the judgment of all humanity to determine who will be saved (Rom. 8:1); rather, it is the judgment of believers to evaluate their lives and reward them accordingly. Nevertheless, the prospect of this judgment is still very sobering (see 1 Cor. 4:5). How does this prospect affect the way Paul lives his life? (1 Cor. 9:24–27; Phil 3:12–14)
18. Read Paul’s description in 1 Corinthians 3:10–15 of how believers will be judged. What kind of work “survives” (vs. 14) and brings reward? (Mt. 25:34–40; 1 Cor. 13:8–13; 15:58)

19. Contemplate for yourself the prospect of standing “before the judgment seat of Christ” (vs. 10). Ask God to examine your heart (Ps. 139:23–24) and to “sanctify you through and through” so that “your whole spirit, soul and body [will] be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:23). Be encouraged that “[t]he one who calls you is faithful and he will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24).