

RISKING ALL FOR LOVE

Knowing the God of Love and Peace 2 Corinthians 13:1–14

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

Day 1: Read 2 Corinthians 13:1–14.

1. As background for chapter 13, summarize what Paul himself has experienced about the reality of Christ. (3:4–6; 4:6; 5:16–6:2; Phil. 2:12–13)
2. What is Paul’s tone in today’s passage?
3. Why does he take this tone? How does he view his own life and ministry, and how then does he expect the Corinthians to view their own? (2:17; 5:10; 12:19; 2 Thess. 2:14–15)

Day 2: Read 2 Corinthians 13:4.

4. What major theme of 2 Corinthians recurs in verse 4? (Recall, for example, 12:9–10.)
5. If Paul had not understood that Jesus submitted to the ultimate weakness of death, what difference would it have made in his ministry? If Paul had not understood that Jesus was raised in power, what difference would it have made in his ministry?
6. What difference does Christ’s death and resurrection make for you today as you face your own weakness?
7. Meditate on Romans 6:4, 11–14 and Colossians 3:1–17. As a Christian, you have resurrection power. Ask God to show you one way that you are thinking and living as if Christ had never died and risen for you.

Day 3: Read 2 Corinthians 13:5–8.

8. In verse 5 Paul exhorts his readers to examine and test themselves to see whether they are “in the faith”—to see if “Christ Jesus is in [them].” What difference does the presence of Christ make in one’s heart and life? (Mt. 5:16; 7:21; Rom. 8:15–16; Gal. 5:22–23; Heb. 10:14; 1 Jn. 3:14)
9. Ask God for the grace to honestly examine your own heart. If you see little evidence of Christ’s work (or if you see the things Paul lists in 12:20b), go to him for forgiveness. Look again at 2 Corinthians 7:9b–10 and 3:16–18 for Paul’s words concerning repentance and sanctification.

Day 4: Read 2 Corinthians 13:7–14.

10. Paul desires “perfection” (vss. 9, 11 NIV) for the Corinthians. This word is more accurately translated “completeness.” It is also the same word used for fishermen “mending” their nets (Mk. 1:19 NASB, NKJV). What does wholeness or completeness look like in a Christian? (Phil. 3:12–14) In the Christian community? (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:11–13)
11. Is wholeness—completeness—a realistic goal? Why or why not? (Rom. 6:1–14; Gal. 5:24–25; 1 Thess. 5:23–24)
12. What does Paul’s desire for the Corinthians lead him to do? (vss. 7, 9, 11, 14)
13. Paul closes this letter with a prayer that includes the three members of the Godhead (vs. 14). As a Christian what have you received from the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit?

Day 5: Reflect on 2 Corinthians.

14. Postlude: Paul does make his third visit to Corinth (in Acts 20:2–3 we read that he spends the winter in Greece [Corinth]). We also know that during those few months that winter he writes his letter to the Romans—his fullest, grandest, most comprehensive statement of the gospel. In view of these facts, what can you guess to have been the response in Corinth to 2 Corinthians?
15. What are some lessons the Holy Spirit has taught you through your study of 2 Corinthians? Consider sharing one of these at our next (and last) meeting.

