

Basic Bible Study | 2 Corinthians 4:7–11

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Completed!

1. Read Your Passage

Read your passage several times in your preferred Bible version. As you read, use the [Highlighting Tool](#) to mark any words or ideas that draw your attention. You could highlight things you want to look up later or key phrases or sentences that seem important for the theme or main idea of the passage.

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Read 2 Corinthians 4:7–11

What questions or insights do you have about this passage? Take note of anything in the text that is confusing, surprising, challenging, or hard to understand. Record your questions here and keep them in mind as you explore your passage further.

Contrast between death and its outworkings in us (struck down, negative emotions) and LIFE of Jesus that provides the perfect remedy.

What enables this? The power of god.

Is there anything we can do to help this?

How can we manifest this life?

2. Read the Passage in Other Translations

3. Identify People in Your Passage

Most passages include references to people and other intelligent living beings. Here we want to identify the people mentioned in the passage and explore the roles they play. You can understand your passage better if you make note of all the people involved including individuals and groups and their roles in events.

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The Biblical People guide section is not currently available on this platform.

Who are the main players in your passage? What makes them important to the passage?

Paul, Christ. One is living For the other. One is living IN the other.

4. Identify Important Cross-References

Examine relationships between your passage and other passages in the Bible. Letting Scripture interpret Scripture has been a guiding principle of biblical interpretation for centuries. The idea is that the meaning of an obscure passage might be clarified by other passages where the meaning is more straightforward.

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CROSS REFERENCES

[Psalm 37:24](#) | though he fall, he shall not be cast headlong, for the LORD upholds his hand.

[Romans 6:5](#) | For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

[Romans 8:36](#) | As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

[1 Corinthians 2:5](#) | so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

[Hebrews 13:5](#) | Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Review each key cross-reference and consider its relevance to your passage. Why is the cross-reference relevant for your passage?

2 cor 1:8 ⁸For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.

([2 Co 12:9-11](#)) But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

([Php 3:7-12](#)) ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Which cross-references are most important for your passage? What additional insight do the related passages provide for your understanding of your passage?

[2 Cor 1:8](#) shows you can be burdened beyond your strength and even despair of life itself and yet not be totally destroyed

[2 Cor 12:9-11](#) shows God's power is made perfect in our weakness....when we are weak THEN we are strong.

Ph 3.7-1) shows that EVERYTHING is a loss anyway compared with knowing Christ. If losing health, or anything else helps me gain Christ then even that loss is a gain.

5. Summarize Your Passage

Review what you have studied and summarize it. Writing a brief summary of your passage and what you've learned about it will strengthen your understanding of the passage and help you remember the main points from your study.

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In a brief paragraph, summarize the passage and the main points you have learned about it from your study.

We are weak, he is strong. When we receive knocks he has the perfect remedy. We may die every day but he LIVES in us.

6. Review Commentary Discussions

Look at Bible commentaries to see how others have interpreted your passage. Review the commentary's discussion to find out which parts of your passage are most challenging or unclear. A commentary discussion may alert you that something you thought was clear in the text is actually a complicated and debated issue.

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COMMENTARIES

[Africa Bible Commentary](#)

[Baker New Testament Commentary: 2 Corinthians](#)

[The Message of 2 Corinthians](#)

[The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#)

[The NIV Application Commentary: 2 Corinthians](#)

[Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 40: 2 Corinthians](#)

[A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians](#)

[A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, Volume 1](#)

[The New American Commentary: 2 Corinthians](#)

[The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 10: Romans through Galatians](#)

[2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary](#)

[Second Corinthians](#)

[Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible](#)

[A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 2 Corinthians](#)

[The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians](#)

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Record insights gained from reading the commentaries. Note especially the parts of your passage that inspired the most discussion in the commentaries.

The most earnest and faithful minister of the gospel must ever remember that humbling truth. He has this precious treasure of the gospel entrusted to his charge; he knows he has it, and he means to keep it safely; but, still, he is nothing but an earthen vessel, easily broken, soon marred,—a poor depository for such priceless truth. Yet God has a good reason for putting this treasure into earthen vessels,—[7](#). *That the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Spurgeon, C. H. (1911). [“Our Light Affliction.”](#) In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons* (Vol. 57, pp. 166–167). London: Passmore & Alabaster.

We are perplexed, but hope has not gone from us. *Dum spiro spero*, was the old Latin proverb,—“While I live I hope;” but the Christian proverb is a still better one, *Dum expiro spero*,—“Even while I die I still have hope,” for “the righteous hath hope in his death.”

Spurgeon, C. H. (1911). [“Our Light Affliction.”](#) In *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons* (Vol. 57, p. 167). London: Passmore & Alabaster.

Paul acknowledges the depth of the trial, yet he confesses that God did not abandon him in it

Martin, R. P. (1998). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 40, p. 87). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

The power to lift man out of his powerlessness in the face of suffering, decay and death does not come from within himself; it comes only from God

Barnett, P. (1988). *The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness* (p. 87). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

The *death* (better, 'dying') of *Jesus* which Paul carries *around in his body* (verse [10](#)) refers back to the fourfold distress of verses [8-9](#) and anticipates the two longer lists of suffering in [6:3-10](#) and [11:23-29](#).

Barnett, P. (1988). *The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness* (p. 89). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

The image therefore serves to emphasize the contrast between Paul's own pitiful weakness and the great power of God . . . What the earthen vessel contains is the only thing that gives it importance.

Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 221). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

As Jerome Murphy-O'Connor notes, it is a Pauline paradox that "dying" should manifest "life" (1991:46). But this is why Paul likens the gospel minister to the expendable, perishable clay pot. Christian reaction to adversity has tended to be "grin and bear it" or "keep a stiff upper lip." Paul's approach is to make clear that it is God's power (v. [7](#)) and the life of Jesus (v. [10](#)) that empower and sustain him, and not his own fortitude. . . This is a hard message for the twentieth-century mindset. We like to be in control of our circumstances and operate from a position of strength

Belleville, L. L. (1996). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 8, 2 Co 4:7). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

That the Christian does not succumb to his problems and difficulties is evidence that *the life of Jesus* is *revealed* within him, through the transcendent, sovereign power of God. Paul, however, is also speaking of the future when God's resurrection power will finally deliver us from death (see verse [14](#)). Then, too, *the life of Jesus* will be manifested within us, but permanently.

Barnett, P. (1988). *The message of 2 Corinthians: power in weakness* (p. 90). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Since he lives in union with Christ, he trusts that God will raise him

Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (2 Co 4:11). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

[The Gospel was never intended to give to men an opportunity of displaying their own talents, and of getting glory to themselves; no: we are "not to preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord . . . To be enriched with all spiritual and eternal blessings should be the one object of your pursuit; and for that your mouth should be opened in prayer to God in secret; and your, soul be expanded under the ministration of his word. Above all, be sure to look to God, and not to man; lest you provoke your God to jealousy, and he withhold from your souls his saving benefits

Simeon, C. (1833). *Horae Homileticae: 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Vol. 16, p. 491). London: Holdsworth and Ball.

The power of the gospel is so great and its glory so profound that it must be carried in a jar, lest people put their trust in Paul himself (my note: today many do put their trust in the "great" preachers. Perhaps if their weakness was more on display...) Reminds me of the Chimp from Dynasties who had to put on a show of strength even tho he was actually weak to maintain his role.

Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (p. 182). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

Have the consulted commentaries modified your understanding of the passage? In what way?

Eternal focus as well as temporal

7. Determine Your Passage's Theological Principles

An important part of Bible study is determining what timeless principles are taught in a passage so that you can apply those principles in your own life. The meaning of a passage will be applied differently at different times and in different places, but the underlying truths of Scripture will be applicable in some way at all times and places. Before we can apply a passage, we must understand its theological principles.

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What theological principles are communicated in your passage?

God is not looking for perfect Christians and doesn't promise us a perfect life here on earth.

God strengthens the weak, and gives life to the dying.

Which theological principles from your passage are most important? How might they be applied today?

Relying on God's Power not your own

Not depending on great men of God or your own strength but God.

Not being surprised when bad things happen

Not lying about how you are feeling but being honest about your challenges, but not defeated.

No stiff upper lip required.

8. Apply the Passage's Principles to Yourself

Consider how to apply the theological principles you identified in this passage to your own life.

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How has this passage challenged or moved you?

To ensure that in my suffering Jesus Power is expressed

I have been encouraged to see that even the great Apostle Paul was not afraid to admit he was struggling

All the more key that we don't teach a form of stoicism and pretend that is Christian faith.

What issues, personal or corporate, are involved with this passage?

Christian approach to suffering

Over exaltation of the pastor

Faith and what it really looks like

What spiritual struggles are addressed in this passage, either directly or indirectly?

The struggle between faith and doubt when challenges come.

What response do you think the passage should inspire in others if you shared it and your insights with them?

ENCOURAGEMENT

HONESTY

OPENENESS

FAITH

9. Share the Insights from Your Bible Study

What have you learned that you should share with others? Your insight could be valuable to others; sharing about it may encourage and enlighten your friends. Use Faithlife Groups, social media sites, email, or conversations to share your insights and start discussions with others. Don't forget to include what steps you might plan to take in response to what you've learned. The ultimate goal of our learning and study of the Scriptures should be a changed life, not merely acquiring more information.

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