



Living Scripture with the Corinthians.
Week 28: Considering 2 Corinthians – The Questioning of Authority

Thank you for joining us here LIVE in the WAJC radio station.
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Intro

We welcome you to this special live stream experience of Chew On This.

You are about to enter a discussion on how to actually live out faith in Christ. Living it out loud within our messy lives. The content of this discussion comes from The Pastoral Preaching notes and this live, small group discussion these notes will prompt here tonight. Something we call: A Community Based Learning Experience. Come, Chew On This with us.

Opening Question(s): [Pertains to Subject being discussed. Pulls listener in.]

Introduction: This is Pr. Orleen Haseltine with and ***** Sam Beamond along with Bruce Nelson (and our very own Otto Steve Lunde & Pr. Robin Bjornson joining us remotely).

Date/Topic:

We thank you for joining us for this week's discussion on Chew On This. This week's topic - **Considering 2nd Corinthians: The Questioning of Authority – Wednesday 4/29th**

Access/Website: All sermon/discussion, raw notes, and handouts are available at: realchurch.org/wednesdaynight

Discussion

Closing Statement [Gives application of the topic. How do I apply to my life what was just talked about?]

Outro (Steve)

Thank you for joining us for this week's discussion on **CONSIDERING 2ND CORINTHIANS: The Ramifications of the Inerrancy of Scripture**
a.k.a. **What does a life look like that believes what the Bible says is actually God's spoken Word?**

To enjoy this process live, come join us and the Wednesday Night Crew every Wednesday night @ Maranatha's Forest Lake Campus @ 6:30PM. This is Steve Lunde, ALWAYS BE KIND.



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“It is significant that Paul’s expression of these teachings in this letter was inspired by the personal crisis he underwent during his rebuttal suffered on his second visit to Corinth (2:1-4, 9), his desperate escape from Ephesus (1:8-11) and his deep anxiety for the Corinthians experienced at Troas and Macedonia (2:13; 7:5-6) it is no exaggeration to say the coming of these ‘other Jesus’, accompanied as it was by a massive assault on the integrity of Paul, could easily have spelled the end of Pauline Christianity there. **That is survived and continued is probably due, in no small part, to this powerful letter.**” (Pg 17 IVP 2 Cor. BST)

Topics Covered:

Living in Spiritual Warfare – Offensive and Defensive

We already do this, do we notice?

[If we do one topic per week, that brings us through May 6th]

- 1.) God has proved faithful in keeping His ancient promises by His recently inaugurated new covenant of Christ and the Spirit (1:18-20; 3:3-6, 14-18). Moreover, God faithfully delivers and holds on to those who belong to Christ (1:3-11, 22; 4:7-9; 7:6).

Faithfulness: Faithful fulfilling of His promises. They did not expect Jesus to be that. When promises are kept in unusual ways. When faithfulness does not look like faithfulness. When God delivers to the back door.

- 2.) The new covenant, based as it is on the graciousness of God (6:1), has now surpassed and replaced the old covenant (3:7-11). It powerfully meets man’s needs at His points of greatest weakness – in His aging and death (4:16-5:10) and in His alienation from God due to sin (5:14-21).

The New Covenant fulfills the Old Covenant

- 3.) Christ is the pre-existent Son of God (1:19; 8:90, the image of God (4:4), the Lord (4:5), the Judge of all (5:10), the sinless one who died as substitute and representative for all people, God reconciling the world to Himself through Him (5:14-21). 2 Corinthians contains Paul’s most comprehensive statement about the death of Christ (5:14-21).

Christ – 100% God/100% Man.

- 4.) Genuineness of New Testament ministry is not established by ‘letters of recommendation’ or by a would-be minister’s mystical or miraculous powers, but by his faithfulness in persuading and his effectiveness in converting people to the Christian faith (5:11-12; 3:2-3; 10-7). The very existence of the Corinthian congregation was Christ’s living letter of recommendation of Paul’s ministry (3:2-3). The pattern and measure of the minister’s lifestyle is the sacrifice of Christ (4:10-15; 6:1-10; 11:21-33). Establishing true criteria for genuine Christian ministry is one of the major contributions of this letter.

What is genuine Christian Ministry? (Prosperity Gospel? NAR?)

- 5.) The ‘word of God’, the gospel, has a definable, limited content which neither Ministers nor anybody else may add to or subtract from (4:2; 11:4). This gospel is exceedingly powerful in bringing rebellious humans under the rule of God (4:6; 10:4-5).

How does one ADD or SUBTRACT from Scripture? (Seeker sensitive? Was it subtracting from scripture?)

- 6.) Paul was, both in person and through his writings, the apostle of Christ to the Gentiles. The risen Lord gave Paul this ‘authority’ in His historic commissioning of him on the road to Damascus (10:8; 13:10), and it is still exercised to subsequent generations through his letters, which now form part of the canon of Scripture. This letter is very important because it is Paul’s major defense of his apostleship to his detractors – both ancient and modern. In it, Paul answers the perennial question why he should be regarded as having authority over churches and Christians.

How do we Question Authority appropriately? (Unity & disunity look like what?)

***“When you cannot discredit the ministry, discredit the person.
 When you cannot discredit the person, discredit the ministry.”***

Pastor Orleen

- 7.) Christian giving and serving arise out of and are in response to the graciousness of God displayed towards and in us. Cheerful and generous giving, in all its forms, brings a harvest of great enrichment to the givers (chapters 8-9).

(The Message of 2 Corinthians, Bible Speaks today. Barnett, Paul. IVP 1988. IL, Downers Grove.)

When Giving and Serving are a response to the Love of Christ, not a duty to earn it.



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TIMELINE

Paul plants the church in Corinth
 Stays 18mths
 Goes to Ephesus to do the same there
 While in Ephesus (2-3yrs) he sends 1 Corinthians via Timothy
 Uproar over 1 Corinthians – Not well received
 Paul makes a 2nd visit to Corinth from Ephesus (2 Cor2:1)
 The visit failed! Opponents insulted him, rebuked him, questioning his Apostolic Authority, Prominent member led.

Paul went back to Ephesus disheartened and distressed.
 He wrote the Corinthians the ‘Severe Letter’ which is now lost. Sent with Titus (2Cor 2:3-13).
 This letter had the success Paul wanted from his 2nd visit (2Cor 7).
 Paul left Ephesus and went to Macedonia. Met Titus there and heard the amazing results of repentance.
 In response to what Titus reported, Paul wrote 2nd Corinthians.

Get your bibles

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I. A View of Unity

John 17:22 (23) ESV

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me though their word, that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one. I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. Oh righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You, and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

2 Corinthians 10:7-8 NLT

⁷ *Look at the obvious facts. Those who say they belong to Christ must recognize that we belong to Christ as much as they do. ⁸ I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn’t tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.*

2 Corinthians 13:9-11 NLT

⁹ *For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. ¹⁰ For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.*

¹¹ *Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.*

1 Corinthians 12:27 ESV

All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it.

[And a body cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be a body and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus’ plan for His church is people unified in the faith.]



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Philippians 2:1-4 (5-11) ESV

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? ² Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. ³ Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

⁵ *You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

⁶ *Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.*

⁷ *Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.*

When he appeared in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

⁹ *Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names,*

¹⁰ *that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,*

¹¹ *and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

II. Views of Disunity (Peter, Church of Corinth, Christ, Paul's is above, Saul, David, Absalom)

Do not underestimate our humanity.

Luke 22:33 **ESV**– **Peter** (situation and fear and...can affect your commitment)

I am ready to go to prison and even death for you!

TEAM ASK & LISTENER ASK

Have you ever underestimated the effect fear and pain and trauma would have on you?
What were the results?

What was the problem with the church of Corinth was having with Paul?

- They did not agree with Paul's leadership.
- They wanted the leadership at the church to run differently.
- They felt they were smarter than Paul.
- They felt Paul was too "blue collar" for such cerebral people as them.
- Paul was not spiritual enough.
- Paul was too hard on sinful behavior.
- Paul was not Jewish enough.
- Paul's ministry did not involve enough miraculous signs.

1 Corinthians 15:32b-34 **NLT**

And if there is no resurrection, "Let's feast and drink, for tomorrow we die!" ³³ Don't be fooled by those who say such things, for "bad company corrupts good character." ³⁴ Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all.

1 Corinthians 3:3-4 **NLT**

³ *for you are still controlled by your sinful nature.*

You are jealous of one another and quarrel with each other. Doesn't that prove you are controlled by your sinful nature? Aren't you living like people of the world? ⁴ When one of you says, "I am a follower of Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," aren't you acting just like people of the world?



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Before we are too hard on the Church@Corinth

Stepping into Disunity: Begins with self-talk

- Well, I am smarter, more educated, more spiritual = Better than/Lesser than
- God told me to tell others.
- Others NEED to know = Taking a private argument public to gain support for yourself.
- Someone has to take them down a peg = Secretly attacking someone’s character.
- ? = Believing you are God’s hand of vengeance.
- They should not be in authority = Believing you are God’s hand of authority. Believing God has told you to correct those in authority.
- If I do not like their talk/their behavior, it is ‘sinful’ = Taking your personal dislike and making it a moral issue to discredit someone.
- Well I am not as bad as = Blaming someone so you feel better about yourself.
- I don’t deserve this. Others have done worse w/no punishment so = Finding an excuse to cover your bad decision.

Stepping into Disunity: Results in

- Gossip
- Backbiting
- Upstaging
- Division
- Bullying
- Power Grabs
- Abuse
- ????
- Sin

TEAM: What results to disunity have you seen in your lifetime?

All Disunity is Disobedience:

- CKif – Get on board to redirect the Pastor.
- XX – Try to kill a program by badmouthing at the leader.
- S – Using scripture to justify your divisiveness

“When you cannot discredit the ministry, discredit the person. When you cannot discredit the person, discredit the ministry.” Pastor Orleen

- Is it immoral?
- Is it unethical?
- Is it unbiblical?

Words of Christ on the concept of Disunity

Mark 3:22-30 (NLT)

²⁰ One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon he and his disciples couldn’t even find time to eat. ²¹ When his family heard what was happening, they tried to take him away. “He’s out of his mind,” they said. ²² But the teachers of religious law who had arrived from Jerusalem said, “He’s possessed by Satan,^[e] the prince of demons. That’s where he gets the power to cast out demons.”

²³ Jesus called them over and responded with an illustration. “How can Satan cast out Satan?” he asked. ²⁴ “A kingdom divided by civil war will collapse. ²⁵ Similarly, a family splintered by feuding will fall apart. ²⁶ And if Satan is divided and fights against himself, how can he stand? He would never



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survive.²⁷ *Let me illustrate this further. Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man and plunder his goods? Only someone even stronger—someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house.*

²⁸ *“I tell you the truth, all sin and blasphemy can be forgiven,²⁹ but anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. This is a sin with eternal consequences.”* ³⁰ *He told them this because they were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.”*

Disunity as warfare:

Disobedience feeds warfare by opening the spiritual door to evil. Evil enters through disobedience/sin and by opening our life to our consequences which breed sorrow, anger, jealousy, etc.

(Saul did not want to accept responsibility for his mess/choices.)

Hebrews 5:11-14 ESV

¹¹ *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.* ¹² *For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,* ¹³ *for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.* ¹⁴ *But solid food is for the mature, **for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.***

Ephesians 6:10-12 ESV

¹⁰ *A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.* ¹¹ *Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil.* ¹² ***For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.***

The Example of Saul:

Offered a sacrifice when it was not his place to do Told that his kingdom would not continue (13:14).
 so (1 Sam. 13:7–12).

Made a foolish curse (14:24, 38–39).

Curse fell on Jonathan and disunity was created (14:44–45).

Spared Agag and spoils of battle (15:8–9).

Rejected by God from being king (15:26–28).

Lost fellowship with God (24:17; 26:21).

Unanswered prayer (28:6).

Visited a medium (28:7–8).

Doom predicted (28:16–20).

Took his own life (31:4).

End of dynasty (31:6).¹

Who did Saul take out his disobedience on? David.

- How did **David** respond?

1 Samuel 16:6 When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, “Surely this is the Lord’s anointed!”

1 Samuel 24:6 He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn’t attack the Lord’s anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him.”

1 Samuel 24:10 This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn’t true. For the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, ‘I will never harm the king—he is the Lord’s anointed one.’

1 Samuel 26:9 “No!” David said. “Don’t kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the Lord’s anointed one?”

1 Samuel 26:16 This isn’t good at all! I swear by the Lord that you and your men deserve to die, because you failed to protect your master, the Lord’s anointed! Look around! Where are the king’s spear and the jug of water that were beside his head?”

¹ *Word in life study Bible*. (1996). (electronic ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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1 Samuel 26:23 The Lord gives his own reward for doing good and for being loyal, and I refused to kill you even when the Lord placed you in my power, for you are the Lord's anointed one.

2 Samuel 1:14,16 "Why were you not afraid to kill the Lord's anointed one?" David asked. "You have condemned yourself," David said, "for you yourself confessed that you killed the Lord's anointed one."

Is this behavior of David's a piece of the key of being the apple of God's eye?

Psalm 17:7-9 (ESV)

⁷ *Wondrously show your steadfast love,
O Savior of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.*
⁸ *Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,*
⁹ *from the wicked who do me violence,
my deadly enemies who surround me.*

Now, **Absalom** was motivated by jealousy.

2 Samuel 15:1-6 (NLT)

¹⁵ *After this, Absalom bought a chariot and horses, and he hired fifty bodyguards to run ahead of him. ² He got up early every morning and went out to the gate of the city. When people brought a case to the king for judgment, Absalom would ask where in Israel they were from, and they would tell him their tribe. ³ Then Absalom would say, "You've really got a strong case here! It's too bad the king doesn't have anyone to hear it. ⁴ I wish I were the judge. Then everyone could bring their cases to me for judgment, and I would give them justice!"*
⁵ *When people tried to bow before him, Absalom wouldn't let them. Instead, he took them by the hand and kissed them. ⁶ Absalom did this with everyone who came to the king for judgment, and so he stole the hearts of all the people of Israel.*

- When disunity plots, it has reached its pinnacle of depravity because you have made the decision to yield your 'kingdom' into Satan's.
- Who we listen to is who we trust. Who we trust is who we love.

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." **John 14:15** **ESV** (obey what I command)

III. The Good News About Disunity:

We control our part in it by:

A. Controlling ourselves:

Ephesians 4:20-24 **ESV**

²⁰ *But that is not the way you learned Christ!—²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

NLT

²⁰ *But that isn't what you learned about Christ. ²¹ Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, ²² throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. ²³ Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. ²⁴ Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.*



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B. Defining our Disunity as sin:

1 Corinthians 5:1-13 NLT

5 I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you—something that even pagans don't do. I am told that a man in your church is living in sin with his stepmother. ² You are so proud of yourselves, but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship.

³ Even though I am not with you in person, I am with you in the Spirit. And as though I were there, I have already passed judgment on this man ⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. ⁵ Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns.

⁶ Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? ⁷ Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you.

Then you will be like a fresh batch of dough made without yeast, which is what you really are. Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us. ⁸ So let us celebrate the festival, not with the old bread^[b] of wickedness and evil, but with the new bread^[i] of sincerity and truth.

⁹ When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. ¹⁰ But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or are greedy, or cheat people, or worship idols. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. ¹¹ I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer^[i] yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people.

¹² It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. ¹³ God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."

Notes:

ISAIAH 49:6-7 ARE WE STILL A LIGHT TO THE WORLD?

The Servant songs of Isaiah offer a powerful hope for Israel and the other nations of the world. The prophet promised a great Servant of God who would come to "raise up the tribes of Jacob" and to be a "light to the Gentiles," and His salvation would reach "to the ends of the earth" (49:6-7).

Later history would show that Jesus Christ is this Servant, this light of the world (Matt. 12:17-21; John 1:4-13; 8:12). However, Jesus has also commissioned His followers to be lights as well, spreading His light to every corner of the earth.

This is clear from Paul's statement to the people of Antioch in Pisidia, citing the Isaiah passage: "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth'" (Acts 13:47, emphasis added). Paul was applying Isaiah's prophecy to himself and the rest of Christ's church—including the church today. Paul was saying that he and we are, in effect, servants of the Servant, bearing His light.

Given this mission, it's worth asking whether we as believers today are still carrying it out.

Are we still a light to the world? If not, there could be at least five reasons for a breakdown:

- **Lack of doctrinal clarity or authority.** The light of Christ was intended to illumine the truth about God (John 7:16-18; 8:31-32). But if we ourselves are still in the dark about what we believe, then we have nothing to persuade others to believe.
- **Moral or ethical compromise.** It is impossible to sustain a credible message about a pure and holy light if we ourselves are living in moral darkness (1 John 1:5-6). God wants us to live a lifestyle that is morally attractive to unbelievers (Matt. 5:14-16; Titus 2:9-10).
- **Disunity or a lack of love for other believers.** Perhaps nothing undercuts the mission of the church more than internal conflict. Why should the world believe in Christ's message of love if His followers are at war with each other? Jesus was fully aware of this when He prayed for the unity of His people (John 17:22-23).



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- **Ethnic and racial prejudice.** The gospel penetrated beyond the borders of ancient Judea because Jesus broke down traditional walls of separation between Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14–22), and because a few brave believers acted on that truth (see “Sure You’re Saved ... Sort Of” at Acts 13:1–3, and “Sure You’re Saved ... Sort Of” at Acts 15:1–21). Are believers still willing to break through cultural barriers today?
- **A lost passion for evangelism and mission.** No one will spread the light of Christ if no one believes that His light still needs to be spread. If one is satisfied that the mission has basically been completed, or that someone else will do it, or that the message has become irrelevant—then the light will go no further. But consider: Someone brought Christ into the midst of your own spiritual darkness. Is there any credible reason why you should not introduce someone else to His grace? Or were you the last unsaved person on earth?

2

How Can the Church Achieve a True, Biblical Unity?

The Bible underscores the importance of “unity” and “oneness.” Unity with others is “good” and “pleasant” (Psalm 133:1). Unity is absolutely essential because the church is the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and a body cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be a body and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus’ plan for His church is people unified in the faith.

The secret to unity begins with how we view ourselves within the body and how we view others. The key verse that addresses this is **Philippians 2:3**: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” All disunity in a church can be traced back to the simple truth that too often we act selfishly and consider ourselves better than others. Paul goes on to explain further in the following verse: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Sadly, churches that experience disunity and are in conflict and turmoil are generally filled with people looking to their own needs, their own desires, and their own ambitions. Such behavior is characteristic of unbelievers, not those with the mind of Christ. Worldliness, not godliness, is the hallmark of the disunited church, as Paul reminded the Corinthians: “For you are yet carnal. For in that there is among you envyings and strife and divisions, are you not carnal, and do you not walk according to men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3).

But Paul tells us that we are to consider others’ needs before our own. In all modesty, humility and lowliness of mind, we are to “be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love” (Ephesians 4:2). A church filled with such people cannot help but have peace, unity and harmony. The truly humble person sees his own faults in light of the perfections of Christ; he does not seek to see the faults of others, but when he does, he speaks the truth in love and desires their sanctification so they will be built up in the image of Christ. He sees his own heart and the corruption that lies hidden there, along with impure motives and evil ambitions. But he does not seek to notice the errors, defects, and follies of others. He sees the depravity of his own heart and hopes charitably in the goodness of others and believes their hearts are more pure than his.

Most importantly, as Christians, we are to see one another in the light of the cross. Fellow Christians are those for whom Christ died a horrible and painful death so that He might exchange His righteous perfection for their sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). How can we not extend to them the love, compassion, and grace of our heavenly Father? How can we demean, criticize, and defame those covered with the precious blood of Christ? Were we not slaves to sin when He called us, hopelessly lost, dead in our own transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1)? But we are now slaves of Christ, slaves to righteousness, and as slaves of the Master, the task before us is not to quarrel and demand our needs be met but to reflect His grace and love to those who are also His by His mercy. A church full of such people enjoying their “common salvation” will be a true, biblical church unified in, and earnestly contending for, the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).³

Absalom. [Unmet expectations of his dad, David, and rightly so. Took God’s timeline/authority into his own hands, not good. Held unforgiveness that turned to bitterness/rebellion – unseat my father and take the throne.]

² *Word in life study Bible*. (1996). (electronic ed., Is 49:6). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

³ Got Questions Ministries. (2002–2013). *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



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Son of King David and his wife Maacah (2 Sm 3:3). The name is also spelled Abishalom (1 Kgs 15:2, 10). Absalom was a handsome young prince who was noted for his long, full hair (2 Sm 14:25, 26). He had a beautiful sister, Tamar, who was raped by their half brother, Amnon. After dishonoring Tamar, Amnon refused to marry her (2 Sm 13:1–20).

Absalom took his dejected sister into his own house, expecting his father David to punish Amnon for his incestuous act. After two years of suppressed rage and hatred, Absalom plotted his own revenge. He gave a feast for King David and his princes at his country estate. Although David did not attend, Amnon did and was murdered by Absalom’s servants after Absalom got him drunk. Then, afraid of King David’s anger, Absalom fled across the Jordan River to King Talmai of Geshur, his mother’s father (2 Sm 13:21–39).

After three years in exile, Absalom was called back to Jerusalem through the efforts of David’s general, Joab, and a wise woman from Tekoa. After two years he was back in full favor with the king (2 Sm 14), and in that position he began to maneuver himself toward the throne. He put on an impressive public relations campaign, in the process undermining confidence in his father the king (2 Sm 15:1–6).

Eventually Absalom plotted a rebellion against David, gathering supporters in Hebron from all over Israel. After Ahithophel, one of David’s wisest counselors, joined Absalom, he announced his own kingship. By the time news of Absalom’s conspiracy reached him, David was unable to do anything but flee from Jerusalem (2 Sm 15; Ps 3).

Absalom arrived in Jerusalem without a struggle, and Ahithophel asked permission to attack David immediately with 12,000 troops. But Hushai, David’s secret agent in Absalom’s court, advised Absalom instead to take the time to mobilize the entire nation against David. He also used flattery, suggesting that Absalom himself should lead the attack. Absalom preferred Hushai’s advice, and Ahithophel out of desperation committed suicide. Meanwhile, Hushai sent word of Absalom’s plans to David by two priests, Zadok and Abiathar. With this information, David crossed the Jordan and camped at Mahanaim (2 Sm 16; 17).

Absalom led his forces across the Jordan to do battle in the forest of Ephraim. David’s loyal forces were under the able generalship of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite, who routed Absalom’s forces. Absalom himself fled on a mule, but his long hair got caught in the branches of an oak tree, and he was left dangling helplessly. Joab, leading his men in pursuit, came upon Absalom and killed him. Joab’s men threw the body in a pit and piled stones on it (2 Sm 18:1–18). Absalom’s death stunned David, who had given explicit orders to keep Absalom from harm. David moaned: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2 Sm 18:33). In his excessive grief, David took no notice that a serious rebellion had been crushed until Joab reminded him that David’s followers had risked their lives for him (2 Sm 19:1–8).⁴

The story of Absalom and David is a study of authority. Do we operate under God’s authority or do we try to manipulate to work towards what we want? Absalom is the study of the later. Keep in mind that Joab thought Absalom should be King. So the plot thickens with people in power supporting those who are in rebellion of God’s authority.

ABSALOM [AB suh lum] (*father of peace*) — the arrogant and vain son of David who tried to take the kingship from his father by force.

Parallels in Wisdom Literature

Whybray argues that the Succession Narrative parallels Wisdom literature. He concludes that the narrative was composed by a wisdom teacher of Israel who “set out deliberately to illustrate specific proverbial teaching” (Whybray, *The Succession Narrative*, 95), and that common threads in the Absalom material depict proverbial truths manifested in life. The Absalom material includes themes such as the importance of counsel (Prov 16:21), retribution (compare Prov 21:7a; 26:27), and Yahweh’s sovereign control over human destiny (Prov 15:3; 20:24) (Whybray, *The Succession Narrative*, 57–66). Crenshaw criticizes Whybray’s conclusion because “the various themes from Proverbs said to be consciously illustrated by the story are common ones in legal and prophetic literature” (Crenshaw, *Method*, 138). Crenshaw asserts that the effort to parallel the Succession Narrative with Proverbs is futile because Proverbs covers “the whole gamut of human existence” (Crenshaw, *Method*, 138).

Supposed Relation to J Source. Second Samuel 13–20 may partly be the derivative source of the material in Gen 2–11 (Brueggemann, *David and His Theologian*). Brueggemann contends, “The particular order of the Genesis

⁴ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). [Absalom](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, pp. 15–16). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.



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material is dependent upon the career of the sons of David and their quest for the throne” (Brueggemann, *David and His Theologian*, 158). If this is so, the parallels between the Absalom material and Genesis would include:

- Absalom hates Amnon; Cain hates Abel
- Absalom murders Amnon; Cain murders Abel
- Absalom is spared by David; Cain is spared by God
- Absalom ushers evil on David’s Dynasty; Noah’s generation is evil
- God intervenes for David; God intervenes for Noah
- Absalom seizes the concubines of David; Ham sees the nakedness of Noah
- David makes a new beginning; God promises a new beginning

(According to Brueggemann, *David and His Theologian*, 174.)

However, these are only general similarities. N. E. Wagner criticizes the parallels as being based upon only minor points of agreement (Wagner, *Abraham and David?*, 131)

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JONATHAN RECK⁵

12:1–31 Nathan’s Oracle against David

About one year later, God sent Nathan to confront David. Nathan told a parable of a poor man’s only ewe lamb taken away by a rich man for his selfish pleasure. David, who as king was responsible for justice in the land, burned with anger against the culprit. Unwittingly, David condemned himself. Nathan accused the king, “You are the man!” (12:7). Nathan declared God’s judgment. **Because he murdered Uriah by the sword, his household would likewise experience the sword.** Since he took the wife of another man, David’s wives would be taken. And though David sinned in secret, he would be publicly humiliated before all Israel (12:1–12; compare 15:16; 16:21–22). These curses were fulfilled by the deaths of three of David’s sons (Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah) and the strife David’s reign experienced toward the end of his life.

To David’s credit, however, he did not shirk his guilt as Saul did when Samuel accused him (compare 1 Sam 15). David confessed his guilt openly and lamented his spiritual impurity (compare Ps 51). The judgment of God began with the child of David and Bathsheba. David prayed and fasted earnestly for the child’s life. David had felt the heavy hand of God’s judgment, but he also knew God’s mercies. For that reason he prayed, believing God might deliver the child. Though the child was not spared, David believed that he would see the child again (12:13–23). In the midst of His chastening, God also was merciful to David and Bathsheba. God gave them another child, Solomon, whom the LORD named Jedidiah (“beloved of the LORD”). From their union came the king who would build the LORD’s temple and rule Israel during its golden age. Evidence of God’s continued forgiveness was Israel’s victory over the Ammonites—this time led by David himself (12:24–31).

13:1–39 Absalom Murders Amnon

Although God forgave David, the consequences of his sin were immediately seen in his household. Just as David had lusted for Bathsheba, Amnon, the king’s eldest son, desired his half-sister Tamar. He lured Tamar into his private quarters and raped her. However, his guilt was too great for his conscience, and he despised her afterwards. He dismissed her, and she took refuge in the house of Absalom, her brother (13:1–20).

⁵ Reck, J. (2016). [Absalom, Son of David](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



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David, like Eli and Samuel, had no control over his sons. Absalom harbored his hatred for Amnon for two years until an occasion arose to kill him. Absalom held a festival attended by Amnon. At the command, Absalom's servants murdered Amnon. Absalom fled to Geshur where he took refuge with his maternal grandfather, Talmi, the king of Geshur (3:3). David wept for his son Amnon, who was special to the king as his eldest and successor to the throne. Yet he longed to see Absalom for the three years they were estranged (13:21–39).

14:1–33 Absalom Returns to David

Perhaps out of concern for the state of the kingdom, Joab wanted David's potential successor returned to the royal house. Similar to Nathan's ruse (chap. 12), Joab sent to the king a woman of Tekoa who pretended to be a woman in mourning. She sought the king's mercy on her only surviving son, who had murdered his brother. When David ruled that the son should be spared, the woman challenged David to reconsider his banishment of his own son Absalom. David agreed and dispatched Joab to retrieve him. David, however, refused to see Absalom's face upon his return to Jerusalem.

15:1–37 Absalom's Coup

Four years later the crown prince mounted an insurrection against the king by taking the king's place in the eyes of the people. Ironically, David's kingdom almost collapsed as a result of his own mishandling of his subjects rather than external threats. Absalom began to play the role of king. He had a private standing guard and functioned as final arbiter of judicial cases. Absalom stole away the hearts of the people, and he attempted to steal the kingdom from David. At Hebron, where his father had been declared king, Absalom's coconspirators acclaimed him king. Among their ranks was David's political advisor, Ahithophel (15:1–12).

Joined by a small but loyal contingency of Kerethites and Pelethites (8:18), David fled across the Kidron Valley toward the desert. He left behind his royal harem. Ittai the Gittite and his six hundred mercenary soldiers (Philistines from Gath) went with David. David sent Zadok and Abiathar back to Jerusalem with the ark of the LORD. David knew that the ark belonged in the house of God. He believed that if God so desired he would return one day to see the holy place of the LORD. The two priests, as prophetic seers, could aid David by learning of Absalom's plans and inquiring of the LORD in his behalf. Also, David countered the wisdom of Ahithophel by ordering Hushai the Arkite to remain in Absalom's service in order to confound the coup's strategy (15:13–37).

16:1–23 David's Anguish in Flight

The dark shadow of Saul again was cast over David as he fled his kingdom. Ziba, Saul's servant and manager of Mephibosheth's estate, maliciously defamed Mephibosheth to better himself (compare 19:24–28). David granted the lands of Saul to Ziba (16:1–4). Shimei, a member of Saul's family, cursed David, calling him a "man of blood" (16:7). This charge probably reflected the enmity many harbored against David. It may refer to David's turning members of Saul's family over to the Gibeonites for execution (chap. 21). Shimei attributed David's pain to the LORD's retribution. David perceived that Shimei's curse, though not altogether just, was part of God's chastening for his sin. David repelled Abishai's ambition to kill Saul's kinsman. David believed that God's vengeance or mercies alone would decide his and Shimei's fates (16:5–14).

Meanwhile, Hushai arrived in Jerusalem to win Absalom's favor. Absalom, not yet ready to trust Hushai, turned to Ahithophel for advice. He counseled Absalom to announce his takeover by the symbolic gesture of publicly sleeping with David's concubines (compare 1 Kgs 2:17–25). Absalom's incestuous act thus fulfilled Nathan's prophecy (12:11). The narrator compared the political adeptness of Ahithophel to the word of God revealed to the prophets (16:15–23).

17:1–29 God Frustrates Ahithophel's Advice

Hushai's task was a formidable one (16:23). Ahithophel advised Absalom to attack David while his troops were in disarray (17:1–4). This time Absalom heard the second opinion of Hushai, who argued that such a tactic would fail because of David's wily experience in warfare (17:5–13). Absalom postponed his attack, which meant that David had the opportunity to withdraw. The LORD "determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel" and thereby doomed Absalom (17:14; compare 15:34). The outcome of the war was decided before the first blow was struck.



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Absalom's strategy was relayed to David's camp at the river fords through Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of Zadok and Abiathar (compare 15:35–36). Meanwhile, the wicked Ahithophel took his own life because he knew that Hushai's plan meant the end of Absalom's kingdom (15:15–23).

David in exile set up his provisional base in Mahanaim across the Jordan (compare 2:8). Absalom established his military command by giving Amasa, Joab's relative, charge of the army. While Absalom organized for battle, David's friends—Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai—refreshed his fatigued army (17:24–29).

18:1–33 Absalom's Death

The story of Absalom's death focuses on David as father rather than as king. David himself remained behind the battle lines at the advice of his troops. He dispatched his commanders, instructing them to care for Absalom's life. Absalom, on the other hand, entered into the battle as it raged in the forests of Ephraim and beyond. The terrain was so precarious that more died from its pits and thickets than the sword. Absalom himself was its victim. He was caught by the head (compare 14:26) in a tree and was suspended in midair. Though reminded of David's instructions to spare Absalom, Joab killed the helpless prince (18:1–17). The tragedy and disgrace of how Absalom died was even sadder because he had no heir (18:18). His three sons had apparently also died (compare 14:27).

The story's detailed description of the two messengers and David's hopes dashed by their news accentuates the anguish of David the father (18:19–33). David's sin had spelled disaster for his family and crippled his own soul: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom. If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son!" (18:33).⁶

AUTHORITY, DIVINE AUTHORITY Greek term for authority, in both the NT and the Septuagint, is *exousia*. Although sometimes translated "power," *exousia* referred primarily not to physical strength or power (as in *dunamis*), but to the rightful and legitimate exercise of power. A person has authority primarily by virtue of the position one holds, not by physical coercion or might.

All authority could be characterized as either intrinsic or delegated. Intrinsic authority is dominion one exercises because it is innate in that person or inherent in the office held by that person. Because He is God and Creator of the universe, God has sovereignty and dominion over all things. Only the triune God has purely intrinsic authority. Delegated authority is given from one who has intrinsic authority to one serving in an office or carrying out a function. Delegated authority is not in itself innately or inherently authoritative; it is authority derived from one whose authority is intrinsic. All authority is properly God's. All other authority is derived from Him (Matt. 9:8; John 19:11; Rom. 13:1–3; Jude 25).

Jesus possesses the same intrinsic authority as God the Father because He is coequal with the Father (John 1:1; 10:30; 16:15; Phil. 2:6; Col. 1:16; 2:9–10; Rev. 12:10). Because of the unique pattern of relationships within the Trinity, however, especially during Jesus' incarnation, there is also a sense in which His authority is given to Him by the Father (Matt. 9:8; 28:18; John 5:22, 27; 17:2; Eph. 1:20–22; Phil. 2:9–10; Rev. 2:27). God has given Jesus authority over all things in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18). Jesus' authority was manifested in His incarnation by His authority to forgive sin, provide salvation, heal sickness, cast out demons, and judge humanity (Matt. 9:6–8; Mark 2:10–12; Luke 4:36; 5:24–25; John 5:22–27). As Jesus carried out His teaching ministry, He spoke with an authority which was immediately recognized by His hearers as being absent in the teachings of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 7:28–29; Mark 1:22; Luke 4:32). Such authority recognized by others on the basis of actions or performance may be called earned authority.

Human Authority Since all authority is derived from God, Christians should submit to the structures of authority that God has established. Submission to authorities ordained by God flows from submission to God Himself. Patterns of authority are necessary in any set of human relationships. Some such authority is positional, in that the authority is by virtue of a position held by an individual, not by any innate authority of the individuals themselves. God ordained civil government to have authority over citizens (Luke 19:17; Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Tim. 2:2; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13–14). He established patterns of authority within family relationships (1 Cor. 7:4; Eph. 5:21–25; 6:1–4). Scripture also sanctions a pattern of authority in work and social relationships (Matt. 8:9; Luke 7:8; Eph. 6:5–9; 1 Tim. 2:12).

God established an order of authority in spiritual matters as well. Since the Bible is God's Word, Scripture speaks with divine authority (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:21–22; 1 Thess. 4:1–2). The Bible affirms the apostolic authority of the first disciples (Matt. 10:1; Mark 3:15; 6:7; Luke 9:1; 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; 1 Thess. 2:6) and the authority of other church

⁶ Dockery, D. S. (Ed.). (1992). *Holman Bible Handbook* (pp. 241–243). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.



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leaders (Heb. 13:7, 17). God also established the authority of certain spiritual beings including angels and Satan and beings in the endtime (Luke 4:6; Eph. 2:2; 3:10; 6:11–12; Col. 1:16; 2:15; Rev. 6:8; 9:3, 10, 19; 14:18; 16:9; 18:1).

Christians have an obligation to submit to the authority of those whom God has ordained to serve as leaders. To rebel against God's appointed authorities is to rebel against God. Humans who wield authority should do so with humility, cognizant of the fact that all temporary human authority flows from God and will be returned to God (1 Cor. 15:24–28). Christian leaders should not flaunt their authority over others but should practice the servant leadership exemplified by Jesus Christ (Matt. 20:25–28; Mark 10:42–45, Luke 22:25–26; 1 Pet. 5:1–3).

Steve W. Lemke⁷

AUTHORITY—the power or right to do something, particularly to give orders and see that they are followed. The word authority as used in the Bible usually means a person's right to do certain things because of the position or office he holds. This word emphasizes the legality and right, more than the physical strength, needed to do something.

The two basic forms of authority are intrinsic authority (belonging to one's essential nature) and derived authority (given to one from another source). Since "there is no authority except from God" (Rom 13:1), every kind of authority other than that of God Himself is derived and therefore secondary to God's power (John 19:11).

God's authority is absolute and unconditional (Ps. 29:10; Is. 40). He has authority over nature (Job 38), governments (Dan. 4:17, 34-35), and history (Acts 1:7; 17:24-31); and He has the power to send people to eternal judgment (Luke 12:5). Jesus Christ has the same intrinsic authority as the Father (John 10:25-30), although this authority is said to be given to Christ from His Father, just as the authority of the Holy Spirit is given to Him from the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-15). Christ has the authority to forgive sins (John 5:26-27), to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:17-18), and to give eternal life (John 17:2).

In addition to the intrinsic authority of God, the Bible speaks of many kinds of derived power. Some of the most important of these are the authority of civil governments (Rom. 13:1-7), parents (Eph. 6:1-4), employers (Eph. 6:5-9), church leaders (Heb. 13:7, 17), angels (Luke 1:19-20), Satan (Luke 4:6), and evil spirits other than Satan (Eph. 6:11-12). There are vast differences among these kinds of authority. Some are permitted by God only for a time.

One derived authority is above every other kind of derived authority, and that is the Bible. Because the Bible is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21), it has divine power and authority. God did not give the Scriptures to be read only, but to be believed and obeyed, and obedience to them releases the holy power within the Word to operate within the believer (James 1:21; 2 Pet. 1:2-4).

Christians are often given certain authority to exercise. This includes the authority of a parent, a church leader, or of the individual believer who ministers in Jesus' name. People were astonished at the authority which Jesus exercised when He taught and performed miracles during His ministry (Matt. 7:28-29, 8:27; Luke 4:36). This same ministry He delegated to His disciples, both during His ministry on earth and beyond it, even until today (Matt. 10:7, 8; John 14:12-14; Mark 16:15-20). The concept of the authority of the believers is rooted in Christ's authority and lordship in the Christian's life. The most noble use of authority is for serving others. "Let...he who governs," Jesus said, be "as he who serves....I am among you as the One who serves" (Luke 22:26, 27). The Christian who seeks to follow Christ's example will learn to use authority with others more than over others. The humble believer will remember that all derived authority will one day be returned to the God who gave it and will always function in praiseful dependence (1 Cor. 15:24-28). The rewards of such faithful service will endure throughout eternity (Matt. 25:14-46; 1 John 2:17).

AUTHORITY. (Acts 8:27) *dunastes* (doo-nahs-tace); *Strong's #1413*: A high official, an important personage, a court official, one invested with power, a ruler, a sovereign, a prince, a royal minister, a potentate. (Compare "dynasty.") Luke 1:52 suggests that the *dunastes* of the world systems will be replaced by the Prince of Peace. In

⁷ Lemke, S. W. (2003). [Authority, Divine Authority](#). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen, & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (pp. 145–146). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.



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Acts 8:27, the *dunastes* only exists during the reign of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. Jesus’ kingdom is a perpetual *dunastes* without end.⁸

TRUTH-IN-ACTION through **2 SAMUEL**

Letting the LIFE of the Holy Spirit Bring Faith’s Works Alive in You!

Truth 2 Samuel Teaches

Action 2 Samuel Invites

Guidelines for Growing in Godliness Godliness is living by God’s Spirit, in the fear of God, under the eye of God, according to the will of God, with an uninterrupted consciousness of God’s indwelling presence. Living this way will keep us from much trouble and tragedy.

14:14 *Continually practice forgiveness*, as this imitates the ways of God.

9:1 *Be careful* to honor past vows and promises you have made. *Be assured* the Lord has heard them.

11:1 *Be certain* that you are always where God wants you to be or you put yourself in jeopardy.

Steps to Dynamic Devotion

God highly values His people’s devotion in worship. David’s humility in worship and Uzzah’s presumption, along with Michal’s criticism regarding worship, have much to teach us. Worship and praise must be our very highest priority.

22:1–23:7 *Learn to praise God* for all victories and spiritual gains. *Understand* that this increases your chances for further victories.

6:14 *Worship* the Lord with your whole being as an appropriate response to His presence.

6:16, 23 *Be careful* not to criticize forms of worship unfamiliar to you. To do so may cause future unfruitfulness.

Steps to Dealing with Sin

The story of David and Bathsheba provides a negative, albeit poignant, object lesson on the importance of avoiding, repenting of, and forsaking sin. Its witness is consistent with the whole counsel of God: Confess and forsake sin quickly or it will prove to be your undoing.

11:3–17 *Confess* known sins. *Do not hide* them. Doing so usually leads to greater sin. *Understand* that continued refusal to deal with sin can lead to serious, even fatal consequences.

12:5–14 *Learn* to see sin as God does. *Seek to develop* within yourself a godly hatred for sin.

Keys to Relating to Authority

Since all authority comes from God (Rom. 13), how we relate to God-ordained and God-appointed authority can reveal much to us about how we, in fact, are relating to God. Whether we submit or rebel will test our true character.

1:11, 12 *Honor* leadership. *Know* that the fall of any Christian leader is a defeat and shame for the whole church.

1:14–16 *Understand* that taking up a cause against any leader is a serious offense. *Know* that God has His ways of dealing with His leaders.

15:1. *Be diligent in loyalty.* *Refuse* to cultivate a following from those of another’s ministry. *Understand* that doing so promotes disunity and division.

⁸ Hayford, J. W., Thomas Nelson Publishers. (1995). *Hayford’s Bible handbook*. Nashville, TN; Atlanta, GA; London; Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers.



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Lessons for Leaders

Spiritual leadership is a sacred trust. How Christian leaders conduct themselves impacts far more than their own lives. This is why they will be more severely judged (see James 3: 1). Also, godly leadership should grow and become stronger through its transmission to subsequent generations.

21:15-22 Leaders, *know* that you must eventually delegate a large measure of your authority to those you have raised up into ministry.

24:1-17 Leaders, *be careful* not to overvalue the importance of numbers.

12:14 Leaders, *understand* that sins you persist in can cause God’s enemies to show utter contempt to the Lord and His people.

6:7 Leaders, *regard* ministry as holy. *Do not act* presumptuously in carrying out assigned responsibilities.

Keys to Moral Purity

One pattern of attack on our moral purity comes through the improper glance that lodges in the mind.

11:2-4 *Guard* your eyes! *Be warned* that a lustful gaze will often lead to lustful thoughts and can result in immoral action.

Steps in Developing Humility

Humility is a premium spiritual virtue. The humble man is not necessarily self-effacing; rather, he refuses to take credit for accomplishments, knowing that any good in his life has resulted from God’s working through him.

15:34; 17:14 *Pray* that the Lord will confuse and frustrate the advice of wicked and ungodly counsel. *Trust* that He will thwart them. *Know* that counsel against God’s people originates from hell and is part of the Enemy’s strategies against you.

Keys to Generous Living

Sacrificial giving flows out of a godly and generous heart.

24:24 *Follow* David’s example. *Learn* to give sacrificially.⁹

TRUTH-IN-ACTION through PHILLIPIANS

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Truth Phillipians Teaches

Action Phillipians Invites

Guidelines for Growing in Godliness Those who observe a godly life see what God is like. This is one of the church’s primary functions. Godliness avoids anything that brings disunity or division in the church. It lives unselfishly, making others the primary focus of its concerns.

1:27 *Conduct your life* as a gospel sermon for observers of your life. *Develop* the heart attitude of unity.

2:3, 4 *Live unselfishly! Turn away from* any selfish ambition or conceited attitudes. *Esteem* others as being more important and more worthy than you are.

⁹ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Sa 24:25). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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How to Develop Dynamic Discipleship

Discipleship is apprenticeship to the life of Jesus, focusing on Christ as Mentor and Model. Jesus chose to lay aside His divine form and adopt the lowly form of man. Even as a Man He did not choose wealth, power, or worldly position, but came as a servant, and died the death of a criminal. In everything He humbled Himself, trusting God to exalt and establish His name. Discipleship may call the Christian to choose to lay aside rights much valued in our culture, and to accept the life-role assigned by God. This role may not appear to be a place of acknowledgment, but trust God to choose how to establish and promote you.

Key Lessons in Faith

Our inheritance as believers can only be received fully by taking a stand on what God has said in the face of contradicting circumstances, sometimes even suffering and death. The stance of faith eliminates fear and worry and brings the freedom to “rejoice evermore.” True faith never says, “I cannot!” Such an utterance betrays unbelief.

Steps to Dynamic Devotion

Devotion focuses on the pursuit of intimacy with God. It is “devoting oneself” to knowing Jesus Christ. One measure of maturity is the degree to which this pursuit becomes our consuming focus and desire. Nowhere is the disciple of Jesus more challenged to become a man or woman “after God’s own heart” than here.

2:2 *Seek to maintain* unity with other believers in your thoughts, attitudes, love, spirit, and purpose. *Recognize* that a separatist “right to one’s own opinion” is not a biblical teaching. *Repent* and *surrender* such arrogance for the sake of unity in the body of Christ.

2:5–11 *Adopt* Christ’s attitude of *unselfishness, servanthood, humility, and obedience.*

2:12, 13 *Commit yourself* to obedience. *Allow* God’s work of salvation to have its full work in you. *Recognize* that your whole Christian life, from being willing to doing it is all God’s work.

2:20, 21 *Understand* that being concerned for the interests of Jesus Christ means being concerned selflessly for the welfare of others.

4:8, 9 *Determine* your own thought life. *Do not let* others do it for you. *Cause your mind to dwell* on those things that bring peace to you and glory to God. *Follow* holy leadership as a pattern for life and faith.

1:6 *Believe* that God always finishes what he starts, including His work in you!

1:21–24 *Do not fear death.* *Remember* that dying in God’s timing and will is only victory for a believer.

1:29 *Recognize* and *accept* that true faith in Jesus Christ will involve suffering for His sake.

4:4–7 *Rejoice* as a constant discipline! *Refuse* to worry about things. *Understand* that Jesus gives peace to those who trust Him and ask for His help.

4:11 *Choose* to be contented in all circumstances.

4:13 *Know* and *believe* that Jesus Christ will enable you to do anything He asks of you. Nothing is impossible for him who believes!

3:7–9 *Understand* that no personal achievements earn spiritual position. *Do not be afraid* to lose everything in your quest to know Christ. *Make* “knowing” Christ your main goal in life. *Know* that this quest always involves sacrifice and unselfish living.

3:12–14 *Aim* to achieve the goal God has set for you. *Spare no cost* in this quest. *Spare no effort* in your pressing toward the mark of knowing Christ,



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3:15 *Recognize* that a single-eyed pursuit of God is the hallmark of true spiritual maturity.

3:17–19 *Know* that those who offer cheap alternatives to knowing Christ become His enemies.

10

2 Peter 1:20

1:20 This can also be translated to say that **no prophecy of Scripture is of private origin** (see marginal note), that is, of the prophet’s own interpretation of his vision. V. 21 makes clear the reason: the prophets spoke as the Holy Spirit guided them. This answers the false teachers’ interpretation, who, without the Spirit, discounted the OT prophetic word (see 2:1; 3:1-6, 16).¹¹

WORD WEALTH 2Peter

2:1 **heresies**, *hairesis* (*hahee-res-is*); Strong’s #139: Compare “heresy” and “heretical.” From *haireomai*, “to choose.” The word originally denoted making a choice or having an option. Progressing to having a preference because of an opinion or a sentiment, it easily slipped into a mode of disunity, choosing sides, having diversity of belief, creating dissension, and substituting self-willed opinions for submission to the truth. The dominant use in the NT is to signify sects, people professing opinions independent of the truth.

12

TRUTH-IN-ACTION through **2 PETER**

Letting the LIFE of the Holy Spirit Bring Faith’s Works Alive in You!

Truth 2 Peter Teaches

Action 2 Peter Invites

Guidelines for Growing in Godliness People who are controlled by the lusts of the flesh have no respect for the life-style of the godly. Such people delight in enticing others into sin. However, God knows the godly and will deliver them, as He knows the ungodly and will judge them. It is His desire that every Christian be able to appear before Him in purity.

- 2:9** *Persevere* in godliness. *Know* it is the safest place you can be.
- 2:19** *Diligently avoid* returning to practices from which you have been delivered. *Understand* that the resulting bondage will be even greater.
- 3:14–18** *Live* a blameless life. *Do not alter* your course toward Christlikeness.
- 3:16** *Be careful* how you handle the Bible. *Recognize* that the untaught distort the truth. *Be careful* what teaching you listen to. *Measure* everything by God’s Word.

Steps to Fruitfulness

Peter gives us a progressive list of Christian virtues that, when established in our lives, will cause us to be fruitful in the very knowledge of God. The life that comes from the knowledge of God can produce only good in its response to

1:5–8 *Recognize* that an effective and productive life results by sanctification (character transformation) that begins with faith and results in love.

¹⁰ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., Php 4:22). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
¹¹ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Pe 1:20). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
¹² Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Pe 1:20–2:1). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.



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others. To fail to grow in Christ results in an inability to perceive the blessings received in initial salvation so that our identification with Jesus is forgotten or ignored.

Steps to Dynamic Devotion

Devotion to Jesus supplies what we need for godliness. Strong devotion results from an unyielding commitment to God's Word, which alone is the source for Christian thinking. Any other source will eventually corrupt the believer's mind.

1:3, 4 *Understand* that God's power provides everything you need to live a godly life through your relationship with Jesus Christ.

3:1, 2 *Strengthen* your thinking by reading, rereading, and studying the Bible. *Understand* that wholesome thinking results from dwelling upon God's Word.

How to Identify the False Teacher

The false teacher or false prophet is led by the flesh, seeking to obtain power or gain for himself from the ministry. Initially, his message may not be false, but his motivation in ministry is fleshly, so he appeals to the fleshly in others, offering them some carnal or soulish satisfaction. He will ultimately introduce some doctrine that is contrary to the truth. Each of us must use the Word of God to measure the words any preacher speaks, and any variation or imbalance in what is taught must be questioned. We also need to be sensitive to the prompting of the Holy Spirit in this judgment. We are to judge only the teaching. God will judge the teacher.

2:1-3 *Reject* any teaching that denies the lordship of Jesus. *Know* that the false teacher brings about distrust of true ministers of God. *Judge* the words of every teaching. *Let God judge* the teacher. *inued*)

2:18-22 *Beware* teaching what sounds good but means nothing. *Be established* so that you cannot be lured back into sin by false doctrine.

Key Lessons in Faith

Logic alone cannot lead us to effective Christian living: faith is needed. The Christian life is the result of hearing God's Word, trusting it, and applying it through faithful obedience. Faith may not yield immediate dividends: its ultimate return will be realized in eternity.

1:4 *Understand* that God's promises result in our 1) sharing in God's very nature and 2) escaping moral and spiritual corruption.

1:16-21 *Recognize* the divine origin of the Scriptures. *Understand* that any personal understanding must be scrutinized in the light of God's Word.

3:11-13 *Understand* that the ultimate goal of the believer is not in this life. *Know* that our hope is in the new heaven and new earth. *Live* with a holy disregard for this world's values and all that controls it.¹³

¹³ Hayford, J. W. (Ed.). (1997). *Spirit filled life study Bible* (electronic ed., 2 Pe 3:16). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.