

Body by God

Discovering Principles from 1 & 2 Corinthians about Building Up Christ's Body

Keeping It Real

Introduction to 2 Corinthians 12-13

On the reality show, *American Idol*, record producer Simon Cowell was the judge that everyone “loved to hate” because of his brutal honesty. Saying he was just “keeping it real”, he felt the singer would greatly benefit from such honesty; this would enable him or her to know what to work on, or whether to just get out of the business altogether. Similarly, unless Christians live in the truth, they will never experience the fullness Christ has to offer them. In this week’s study Paul modeled this, showing three actions Christians must take to “keep it real”, actions which facilitate personal growth, and enable others to grow as well. The first one that Paul exemplified was that of acknowledging one’s strengths and weaknesses. Paul had great

strengths, including having heard heavenly revelations that no other had been privileged to hear. He had also performed divine miracles and signs that had authenticated his ministry. However, he chose to ignore these strengths, and rather to focus on his weakness, his “thorn in the flesh”. While no one knows what this was, Paul desired that God would remove this “messenger from Satan”, but God said “no”. He told Paul that His grace was sufficient for him, and that he should allow this “thorn” to keep his pride in check, which is what Paul did. The next helpful action that Paul fleshed out was that of accepting responsibility for the growth of those whom God had called him to shepherd. It was not enough to



Following God's principles will develop a church body that can glorify Him fully

let them act as they wish, but, like a good father, he chose to nurture and discipline his spiritual children so they could grow. Finally, Paul showed the importance of holding others accountable if they are to have the greatest opportunity for growth. While sometimes unpleasant, these growth-facilitating actions are necessary to “keep it real”.

The 5 Purposes of the Purpose Driven Life

- Worship—You were planned for God’s pleasure
- Fellowship—You were formed for God’s family
- Discipleship—You were created to become like Christ
- Ministry—You were shaped for serving God
- Evangelism—You were made for a mission

Study/Discussion Questions for 2 Corinthians 12-13

(For answers to questions attend an ABF or go to www.celebrationnet.com/resources/leader resources)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Read 12:1-6. Describe what had happened to “a man” (v2, 4)? If this “man” refers to Paul, what did he choose to focus on instead of this (v5), and why (v6)? What does this teach us? | |
| 2. Using 12:7-10 what had God allowed in Paul’s life and why (v7), and what was his reaction (v8)? What was God’s response (v9), and Paul’s final reaction (v9-10)? How can we apply this? | |
| 3. From 12:11-13 what were Paul’s “credentials” (v12), but how had he been treated (v11)? How had they misunderstood Paul’s approach (v13), and what does this say about them? | |

(Continued on Next Page)

2 Corinthians 12-13 Study Questions (cont)

4. According to 12:14-15 what was Paul's attitude towards these Christians (v14) and what principle does this reveal (v14)? What was Paul willing to do for them as their spiritual "parent" (v15)? How could we put this into practice?

5. Looking at 12:16-18 what had Paul been apparently accused of (v16, 17-18), and why do you think the Corinthians thought this about Paul and his team? What was the truth (v18)?

6. Using 12:19-21 why was Paul saying all of these things—for his defense, or for their growth (v19)? What did he fear was going on among them (v19), and what did he fear that would lead to (v20)? Why was Paul afraid of this (v20)?

7. Based on 13:1-6, what was Paul committed to (v2), and how would he be sure he was right (v1)? What was his greatest concern for them (v5-6), and how should we apply this truth?

8. Read 13:7-10. What was Paul's goal for the Corinthians (v9), and what did that make him willing to do (v7, 10)? Why is this type of accountability so important?

9. From 13:11-13 what things did Paul want the Corinthians to be working on (v11, 12)? What promise went along with this (v11)?

10. According to 13:14 in what way does each person of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) contribute to our daily life? Why are each of these contributions important?

11. As you look back over 2 Corinthians 12-13, how do you see Paul's commitment to humility and truth? Why are these two values necessary for truly helping others?

Scripture to Remember

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

Celebration Fellowship

*Reaching—
Restoring—Raising Up*

We're on the web

www.celebrationnet.com

Life Group Questions

(Using questions based on today's message, Life Groups meet in homes to build supportive relationships with others at Celebration Fellowship that enable us to grow in Christ.)

1. Throw out some ideas of what you consider to be the "ABC's" of Jesus' way of doing ministry. How well do you feel you do these things?
2. Think about the "real life" needs of some people in your life, and share this with the group. How do we normally deal with these, and how should we?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (10 most positive, 1 most negative), let each person rate their perception of trying to live the Christian life. Explain why.
4. How can we bring Christ's way of life to a practical level? Why is it important to emphasize progress over perfection in this?
5. Share what "walking in the Spirit" means to you. What are some things in your life that you think grieve or quench the Spirit? Pray for these things as a group.
6. Discuss anything else that impressed you from the worship service if you have time.