

POWER IN
WEAKNESSES

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

For each week we will upload three devotions that build upon and link to our Kids Alive message on Sunday. Three devotions means:

- Those who already do devotions can continue these the other half of the week;
- Those for whom devotions are possible at most every second night of the week can also be included.

The devotions will follow this format:

INTRO

A short introductory activity or discussion

RECAP

A recap of the previous devotion

READ

A short passage will be printed. This makes it less time-consuming and also excludes the need to find a bible.

EXPLORE

Some simple comprehension questions that direct our understanding of the passage

APPLY

Something we can learn from the passage and apply to our own lives

PRAY

Suggested prayer points that come from the passage

MEMORY VERSE

This is only suggested if time permits as it may be a slightly longer activity. You may design something to remember the verse or do some fun games or activities to aid in remembering the verses.

WEEK 1: July 28-August 3

DAY 1

INTRO:

What do you know about and how are you feeling about Mission 2020?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ ACTS 18:9-11

⁹One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

EXPLORE:

What did the Lord tell Paul to do? *(He told him not to be afraid, & to keep on preaching)*

Why did he tell him to do this? *(Because the Lord had many people in the city of Corinth)*

What did Paul do in response? *(He stayed for eighteen months teaching the word)*

APPLY:

Up until this point in the story of Acts Paul had travelled around different places preaching the gospel for under a month. However after the Lord's assurance that he had many people in Corinth Paul settled down to make Corinth his base of operations. In Mission 2020 we hope and pray that the Lord has many people in our city who he might call to himself as we teach the good news about Jesus.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that through Paul's faithful ministry the church in Corinth grew. Pray that we might similarly be faithful in our witness so that our local churches might grow as we go into our communities with God's word.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. **1 Corinthians 4:15**

As a result of his ministry Paul was able to write this week's verse. Use this verse to pray for Mission 2020, for our churches and for yourself as you share the gospel with others.

WEEK 1: July 28-August 3

DAY 2

INTRO:

Have fun getting each member of your family to act like a baby. Can they do so in a different way than the previous person?

RECAP:

Why did Paul settle down in Corinth for a year and a half?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 3:1-6

¹ Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere babies in Christ. ² I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings? ⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul think the Corinthians were acting? (*Like babies, or in a worldly way*)

Why did he think this? (*They were arguing about who was the best leader*)

How did he suggest they think about their leaders? (*As servants simply doing the job given to them by God*)

APPLY:

Although Paul planted the church in Corinth his first letter to them shows that they were divided in their feelings towards him. Some felt that other leaders of their church who came afterward were better. This problem persisted and we will see the Corinthians continued to wrestle with the same problem as we study Paul's second letter to them.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has raised up for you servant leaders who faithfully do the job given to them by the Lord. Pray that we might not compare leaders but grow up by thanking God and praying for them all equally.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15

Use this week's verse to praise God for all those who became 'your father' through the gospel!

WEEK 1: July 28-August 3

DAY 3

INTRO:

Have everyone in your family imitate how their father acts.

RECAP:

Why did Paul think the Corinthians were acting like babies?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 4:15-21

¹⁵ In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you to imitate me. ¹⁷ For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. ¹⁸ Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹ What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

EXPLORE:

Why did Paul want the Corinthians to imitate him? (*He had become their father through the gospel*)

Why did Paul send Timothy to the Corinthians? (*To remind them of Paul's way of life which agreed with his teaching so they could imitate him*)

What was Paul planning to do next? (*Come to visit them; he hoped he wouldn't have to discipline them like a dad but that he could be gentle and loving because they had changed*)

APPLY:

Paul wanted the Corinthians to change their babyish ways, and, like a father, was willing to discipline his children if necessary to encourage them to do so. We know from 2 Corinthians that he ended up having to visit the church and discipline them. This visit created problems as we shall see. Although none of us like discipline we need to understand and appreciate the reason it is given, especially if it is designed to stop our ungodliness!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he disciplines us like a father so that we might be holy (Hebrews 12:5-11). Pray that we will submit to and respect those who discipline us, even if it isn't pleasant to do so at the time.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. **1 Corinthians 4:15**

Use this week's verse to pray for those who discipline you, whether it be your boss, teacher, parents or someone else.

WEEK 2: August 4-10

DAY 1

INTRO:

Share with your family a special time when your father comforted you.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:1-4

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul describe our Father? (*As the Father of our Lord Jesus & the Father of compassion and comfort*)

Why did he describe him as the God of all comfort? (*Because our Father comforts us in all our troubles*)

Why does our Father comfort us? (*So that we can pass on the comfort we've received from God to others when they are in trouble*)

APPLY:

This is a beautiful start to a letter! It reminds us that God is not impersonal or uncaring, but that, like our earthly father, he loves to comfort us when we are troubled. He does this not just because he loves us but so that we can share his love with others to encourage them!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he is always with us, loving us when we need comfort and encouragement. Pray that we might pass this on to others so that we are encouraging and comforting people when others are upset.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles. **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

Draw a picture of your father comforting you when you're sad, and add to it this week's verse.

WEEK 2: August 4-10

DAY 2

INTRO:

What has someone shared with you lately?

RECAP:

Why does God comfort us?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-7

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. ⁵For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

EXPLORE:

As an apostle what does Paul share with Jesus according to verse 5? (*He shares in his suffering*)

Why does he do this? (*For the salvation of the Corinthians, and for the sake of their endurance as they share in the same suffering*)

What hope does this give Paul? (*The hope that the Corinthians will also experience the same comfort from God as Paul*)

APPLY:

Paul uniquely suffered like Jesus; in fact a few times, like Jesus, Paul referred to himself as the suffering servant of Isaiah! It gave Paul great comfort to know that as God had comforted him through his suffering the Lord would similarly comfort others in their troubles.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he comforts us when we suffer for the sake of the gospel. Pray that the possibility of suffering might not make us scared of sharing the good news with others, but that, like Paul, we will be willing to patiently endure it for the sake of Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Pass this week's verse on around your family by saying the verse to someone and then giving them a hug.

jWEEK 2: August 4-10

DAY 3

INTRO:

Who do you know who is going through a really difficult time at the moment?

RECAP:

Why was Paul willing to suffer like Jesus?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8-11

⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. ⁹Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. ¹⁰He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, ¹¹as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul describe the difficult time he had recently been through? (*He was under great pressure, he wasn't able to endure it, he despaired of life, he felt he had been sentenced to death*)

Why did he say all this happened? (*So that he might not rely on himself but on God*)

What part did Paul see the Corinthians playing in all he went through? (*They helped Paul by praying for him*)

APPLY:

Paul reflected that he had gone through a really terrible time so that he might trust more in our God who can raise the dead and so that thanks might go to God as more people saw him deliver Paul from such danger. How faithfully do you pray for people in similar situations?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he can raise the dead and so he can save us from life-threatening situations. Pray for anyone you know who needs to know and experience this.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Use this week's verse to continue to pray that the Lord will deliver those people you know who have it particularly tough at the moment.

WEEK 3: August 11-17

DAY 1

INTRO:

Discuss with your family your plans for the week.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:16-20

¹⁶I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both "Yes" and "No"? ¹⁸But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." ²⁰For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him we can say "Yes, Amen" to the glory of God.

*EXPLORE:

What had Paul planned? (*To visit the Corinthians*)

What did the Corinthians accuse Paul of? (*Being fickle: saying 'Yes' but meaning 'No' (because he hadn't come to visit them as planned)*)

What was Paul's answer to this? (*Since we believe that God is faithful in keeping his promises so you can trust us to be faithful*)

APPLY:

Paul defends himself against the Corinthians' attack in a very interesting way. Rather than starting off by simply explaining why his plans didn't work out he uses the occasion to point to God's character and share how he wants to be like God!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has faithfully kept all his promises by fulfilling them in Christ, his Son. Pray that we will likewise faithfully keep our promises, not being people who change our mind and plans all the time, but being people who others can trust.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. **2 Corinthians 1:20**

Come up with actions for this week's verse.

WEEK 3: August 11-17

DAY 2

INTRO:

Who have you upset recently? Why did this happen? What did you try to do about it?

RECAP:

What had Paul planned to do that hadn't happened?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1:23-2:4

²³I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. ¹So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. ²For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? ³I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. ⁴For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

EXPLORE:

Why didn't Paul visit the Corinthians as planned? (*He wanted to spare them a painful visit*)

What did he do instead? (*He wrote them a letter, even though it was really hard for him to do so*)

Why did he write this letter? (*To let the Corinthians know the depth of his love for them*)

APPLY:

Having explained how his character is shaped by God's faithfulness Paul now explained to the Corinthians why he didn't visit as planned. There was obviously something unpleasant that needed to be dealt with which seems to relate to them standing firm in their faith (2:24). Paul wanted to both deal with the issue and also do it in the best possible way for the sake of Corinthians. Balancing dealing with an issue and seeking the best for the other person involved is tough; how do you feel you generally go with this, and how did you go with it in the situation you shared above?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he shows us that real love demands that we deal with an issue in an other-person-centred way. Pray that we will seek the good of others rather than avoiding awkward or potentially difficult situations.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. 2 Corinthians 1:20

Recite this week's verse, and then brainstorm how many promises God has made AND how he has fulfilled them in Jesus!

WEEK 3: August 11-17

DAY 3

INTRO:

Who have you had to forgive lately? How easy did you find it?

RECAP:

How did Paul deal with the difficult issue that had come up with the Corinthians?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 2:5-11

⁵If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. ⁶The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. ⁷Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul want the Corinthians to do to someone who had caused them grief? (*Forgive and comfort the person*)

Why did he want them to do this? (*To reaffirm their love for the person*)

Why did Paul say he had forgiven the person? (*So that Satan might not outwit the church*)

APPLY:

In this passage Paul shares two important reasons to forgive: to show love to someone, and to combat Satan's schemes. How do these two reasons affect you, both in forgiving and in asking for forgiveness? Do they make you more or less likely to do so?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has forgiven us in Jesus Christ his Son. Pray that we might extend this same forgiveness to others to show love and to stop bitterness or anger taking root in our hearts.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

No matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. **2 Corinthians 1:20**

Use this week's verse as a prayer, asking God to help us to be as faithful!

WEEK 4: August 18-24

DAY 1

INTRO:

See if your children can identify some different smells when they are blindfolded! Perhaps use a fresh cookie, some dirty socks from the laundry, and a flower.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 2:14-17

¹⁴Thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. ¹⁵For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? ¹⁷Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

EXPLORE:

For what did God use Paul and his friends? *(To spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere)*

How did people respond? *(To some it was a beautiful smell; others thought it stunk!)*

How did Paul do this task? *(He did not do it like most others at that time for money; instead he spoke with sincerity as someone sent from God)*

APPLY:

Like Paul, we will often experience two reactions when we speak of knowing God. Some people will respond well and others will not, depending upon whether God has chosen them to belong to him. Do you avoid speaking of such things because of the potentially negative reactions, or does the hope of a positive response generally make you speak with sincerity as someone sent from God?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. Pray that we might speak the word sincerely, and not avoid this because of our fear of others responding badly.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Come up with a creative way of decorating this week's verse.

WEEK 4: August 18-24

DAY 2

INTRO:

If you had to get someone to write a letter explaining who you are and what you are like, who would you pick?

RECAP:

How did people respond to Paul sharing the knowledge of God with them?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 3:1-6

¹Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. ³You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ⁴Such confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. ⁶He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul say the Corinthians were? (*They were his letter of recommendation*)

Why did he say this? (*They showed the result of Paul's ministry, because he had shared the gospel with them*)

What sort of minister did they show Paul to be? (*A competent minister who, through the Spirit, had given them life*)

APPLY:

The Corinthians showed what sort of man Paul was and what his ministry was like because he had led them to Christ. Who would do this for you? Can you point to anyone who you have invited to church, ministered to or seen come to new life in Jesus? What does this recommend about the sort of life you have led?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that through his Spirit he can change us. Pray that we might be changed to work in other's lives so that they show the sort of life we have led.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Who shared Jesus with you so that God's light shone into your heart? Use this week's verse to thank God for them!

WEEK 4: August 18-24

DAY 3

INTRO:

Cover some everyday items with a tea towel to see if your family can identify them.

RECAP:

Why did Paul call the Corinthians his letter of recommendation?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 3:7-16

⁷Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, ⁸will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? ⁹If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! ¹⁰For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. ¹¹And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! ¹²Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. ¹³We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. ¹⁶But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

EXPLORE:

Why did Moses have to cover his face in verses 7 and 13? (*Meeting with God regularly made his face shine with glory; see Exodus 34:29-35*)

Who similarly still have their hearts veiled in v14-15? (*Those who don't believe in Jesus*)

What removes these veils? (*When anyone turns to the Lord*)

APPLY:

This passage explains why some people just do not believe the good news of Jesus: it is like their hearts and minds are covered so the knowledge of God cannot get in.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he removed the veil from our hearts so that we might believe in his Son. Pray that people you know who are still veiled will turn to the Lord!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts.

2 Corinthians 4:6

Use this week's verse to pray for people in our local community.

WEEK 5: August 25-31

DAY 1

INTRO:

Since we believe that people can only believe in Jesus if God reveals who he is to them, how do you think this should impact the way we share Jesus with others?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

¹Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

EXPLORE:

What does Paul say he doesn't do when he preaches Christ? (*He doesn't lose heart, nor use secret, shameful or deceptive ways; he doesn't distort God's word*)

What does he do? (*He plainly sets forth the truth; he commends himself to everyone's conscience; he preaches Christ is Lord and that he is simply his servant*)

Why does he do this? (*Because he knows God will reveal Christ to them if he does so*)

APPLY:

This is a challenging passage, because often we think that if only we had all the answers, or were clearer speakers, people might be saved. Here Paul challenges us that gospel ministry doesn't rest on us but on God, who will unveil people's minds to see the glory of Jesus if he wants.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he made his light shine in our hearts to give us the knowledge of his glory displayed in Christ. Pray that we might follow Paul's example and just speak about Jesus, leaving the results to God so he might do the same for others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Write the words of this week's verse onto slips of paper and get your family members to pull them out of a container (a clay jar would be best) one at a time to assemble the verse.

WEEK 5: August 25-31

DAY 2

INTRO:

If you found treasure where would you put it to keep it safe?

RECAP:

How did Paul go about his ministry since he trusted God to reveal Jesus to his hearers?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-12

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

EXPLORE:

Where does God put the treasure of the knowledge of his glory? *(In clay jars; that is, in us!)*

What did this practically look like for Paul as an apostle? *(He was hard-pressed on every side, perplexed, persecuted and struck down, but neither crushed, in despair, abandoned nor destroyed)*

Why did all this happen to him? *(Like Jesus he was given over to death so that the life of Jesus might also be seen in him)*

APPLY:

The idea of treasure in jars of clay sounds lovely until we unpack what Paul meant by this picture! As an apostle he went through awful experiences so that the power and glory of Jesus might be seen to be sustaining him. As a Christian, how do you feel about going through struggles so that Jesus' power might be seen in your weakness?

PRAY:

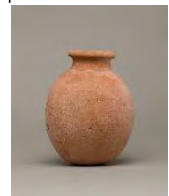
Thank our Heavenly Father that the life of Jesus can be seen in us for the sake of others. Pray that we might be willing to show Jesus' power and glory strengthening us in hard times.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Cut out different sized clay jars and write on them this week's verse. Put it in a place where you will see it to remind you of this week's verse. -



WEEK 5: August 25-31

DAY 3

INTRO:

How often do you speak about God to others? Why do you think you don't do it more often?

RECAP:

Why does God put the treasure of his gospel in us?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 4:13-18

¹³We believe and therefore speak,¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. ¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul feel about his considerable problems? *(They were ultimately only light and momentary troubles)*

Why did he have this perspective? *(Because while he felt he was wasting away he was inwardly being renewed and raised to be with Jesus)*

What did he keep doing then? *(Speaking the word of God so that God's grace might reach more people and more thanks go to God)*

APPLY:

Speaking about God regularly got Paul into all sorts of trouble! However he says he fixed his eyes on what was unseen, not seen: he knew many people were turning to the Lord and being saved, and so praise was going to God. Glory going to God was what helped Paul persevere!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that his grace is reaching more and more people each day. Pray that we would be more concerned for people's salvation and God's glory than our own light and momentary troubles that might arise if we speak God's word to others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL- ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God.

2 Corinthians 4:7

Say this week's verse as you flex your muscles and adopt other different positions showing power.

WEEK 6: September 1-7

DAY 1

INTRO:

Have you ever been camping in a tent? How do you feel about it? How do you generally feel when it is time to return home – do you long for it or feel a little disappointed?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5

¹For 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. ²Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, ³because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. ⁴For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

EXPLORE:

What was Paul actually talking about when he spoke of our earthly tent? (*Our bodies*)

What did he say we long to be clothed with? (*Our new, resurrected body*)

Why was Paul sure this would happen? (*God has given us his Spirit as a deposit to guarantee this*)

APPLY:

Here Paul explains why he was able to focus on what was to come instead of on the troubles he was going through. He longed to be resurrected and was sure of this happening because of the Holy Spirit within him. How true is this of you? Do you long to be with the Lord Jesus, or are you actually the opposite and you long to continue living this life?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has given us his Spirit as a deposit guaranteeing the life to come. Pray that we might groan for the next life and come to long for it more than this one.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Write out this week's verse and then fold the piece of paper into a tent to remind you of this passage.

WEEK 6: September 1-7

DAY 2

INTRO:

When is your next holiday? How keen do you feel about going away?

RECAP:

What did Paul long for?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:6-10

⁶We know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. ⁷For we live by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul feel about going away to be with the Lord Jesus? (*He preferred it to life now!*)

What did he do in the meantime? (*His goal was to please the Lord wherever he was*)

Why was this his goal? (*He knew that when he went to be with the Lord he would be judged*)

APPLY:

Be honest: how keen are you to go away to be with the Lord? Is this something you ever really even think about? The same questions can be asked about appearing before the judgement seat of Christ! Does this affect what you do each day, or do you simply make the most of your time here on earth because you don't think much about the life to come?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that we have the hope of being with the Lord one day. Pray that he might change our hearts so that our greatest desire is to please him while we are still here on earth, so that we are ready to meet him one day.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

As we've seen above this week's verse is really quite challenging! Design a poster of this verse to put near your front door so that you will see it each day as you leave and be challenged to live to please the Lord.

WEEK 6: September 1-7

DAY 3

INTRO:

What do you fear? What does this fear make you do?

RECAP:

What did Paul do each day while he waited to be with the Lord?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-15

¹¹Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. ¹²We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. ¹³If we are "out of our mind," as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul fear? (*The Lord; linked with the previous devotion this means he lived in light of God's judgement*)

What did his fear make him do? (*Try to persuade others that Jesus died for them so that they could live in a different way*)

How did people react to this? (*While some people said he was out of his mind, Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand his motivation and be proud of his ministry as an apostle*)

APPLY:

In this passage we see what happens when we do live in light of the judgement to come. A right understanding of God's judgement leads us to try to convince others that there is a better way to live. Paul says that Jesus' love in dying for us compelled or made him try to persuade others to live a resurrected life for Jesus rather than just living for themselves.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus loved us so much he would die to save us from judgement. Pray that we would be so convinced of this that we also can't help but tell others about his great love!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We live by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

Guide the blindfolded members of your family from room to room in your house by repeating this week's verse so that they must follow the sound of your voice to get to the goal.

WEEK 7: September 8-14

DAY 1

INTRO:

When have you had to represent your school or family? How did it go? What did you have to do?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16-21

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. ²¹God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

EXPLORE:

What has God done for us in Jesus? (*Reconciled the world to himself [made us friends with him] by not counting people's sins against them*)

What do those who believe in Jesus become as a result? (*A new creation*)

How then did Paul represent Jesus as his ambassador? (*He appealed to & implored people [he begged them] to be reconciled to God*)

APPLY:

There are many memorable verses in this passage! Because Paul was convinced of Christ's love he begged people to become God's friends so that they might be recreated to live in a right way for God. How much do you feel like a new creation? The great news is no matter how we feel, it is still true!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he no longer counts our sin against us and has made us new. Pray that we might be God's righteousness, and so represent Jesus to others.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20

Write out this week's verse and decorate it with your favourite team colours.

WEEK 7: September 8-14

DAY 2

INTRO:

Can you think of a time when someone acted in a way that gave their school, team or company a bad name? What did they do?

RECAP:

What did Paul do as Jesus' representative?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-11

³We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardship and distresses; ⁵in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸through glory and dishonour, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul see himself? (*As a servant of God*)

What did he try to avoid as a result? (*Causing anyone to stumble in a way that discredited his ministry*)

What did he try hard to do? (*Commend his service of God no matter what happened*)

APPLY:

When we read through this list Paul tried hard to represent Jesus in extraordinary situations. How do you go with this in everyday life? Are you giving Jesus a good or bad name in how you react to what happens to you?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has called us to be his servants and represent Jesus. Pray that no matter what happens to us we will not cause anyone to stumble so that our ministry may not be discredited and so glory goes to Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20

Dress up in a suit, jacket or blazer and take turns announcing this week's verse.

WEEK 7: September 8-14

DAY 3

INTRO:

Think of your best friends. What do you have in common with them?

RECAP:

In what sort of situations did Paul try to represent Jesus?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-7:1

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Satan? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people." ¹⁷Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." ¹⁸And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." ¹Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of godly reverence.

EXPLORE:

What opposites did Paul talk about above? (*Believers & unbelievers, righteous & wicked, light & dark, Christ & Satan, God & idols*)

Why did he compare these things? (*They don't have anything in common; there can be no fellowship, harmony or agreement between such things*)

What was his point in comparing them? (*We need to purify ourselves and be holy*)

APPLY:

This is a difficult passage to apply! We've already seen Paul represents Jesus to an unbelieving world, so his point can't be that we shouldn't be friends with people who don't know Jesus. Rather he is saying that if we belong to God's people we need to be like our Heavenly Father and separate ourselves from anything that will make us unclean. Paul seems to say this for two reasons: he wants the Corinthians to forgive him and be reconciled to him, and, as we shall see, to leave the false teachers they have turned to.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has promised to live and walk with us. Pray that we will therefore be holy as he is holy so that we please him.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors. 2 Corinthians 5:20

Separate your family members to opposite sides of a room and have them call out the words of this week's verse one by one to one another.

WEEK 8: September 15-21

DAY 1

INTRO:

What good news have you recently received that lifted your spirits?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:5-7

⁵When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul feel when he came to Macedonia? (*Harassed by conflicts; afraid*)

What led to Paul's spirits being lifted? (*God comforted him by sending Titus*)

What good news did Titus bring? (*Titus told Paul how the Corinthians longed for Paul, and were deeply sorry & concerned for him*)

APPLY:

Titus brought Paul news that cheered him up, but Paul recognised that behind this lay God's work of comforting the downcast. When good things happen to us praise ultimately belongs to the Lord! How do you go with this? Is Praising God a natural reaction for you or something with which you struggle?

PRAY:

Thank God that he comforts those who are down by increasing their joy through others. Pray that we might remember to praise the Lord at the end of each day as we reflect that the good things that have happened have ultimately come from his hand.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Come up with actions to help you learn this week's verse

WEEK 8: September 15-21

DAY 2

INTRO:

What has brought you sorrow in the last few weeks?

RECAP:

What brought Paul joy when he was down?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:8-11

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.

EXPLORE:

What brought the Corinthians sorrow? (*Paul wrote a letter that hurt their feelings*)

What did their sorrow lead to? (*Repentance; earnestness, eagerness to clear their name, indignation, alarm, longing, concern and justice... all good things!*)

What did Paul say is the opposite of repentance? (*Regret*)

APPLY:

As we have previously seen Paul previously wrote to the Corinthians a letter about some sin in their church (2:1-9). Here we learn that the Corinthians found this letter quite confronting! However in their sorrow the Corinthians examined themselves and fixed the problem rather than just resenting that Paul raised something painful. How would you respond if someone challenged you about sin in your life... regretful or repentant?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he confronts us with our sin in a serious and loving way. Pray that we might open ourselves up to others so that we can both do and experience the same in a similar way.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Write out this week's verse, replacing the letter 'o's with tears and the 't's with the cross.

WEEK 8: September 15-21

DAY 3

INTRO:

What refreshes you? What gives you energy and enthusiasm when you're feeling down?

RECAP:

What did the Corinthians do in their sorrow?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 7:13-16

¹³In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

EXPLORE:

What refreshed Titus? (*The Corinthians*)

What had Paul told Titus about the church? (*Paul had told Titus things about the Corinthians, and everything he had said had proved to be true when Titus visited*)

How did Paul feel as a result? (*Delighted (v13), not embarrassed (v14), confident (v16)*)

APPLY:

Despite their previous difficulties Paul was now looking forward again to visiting the Corinthians because Titus' visit had shown that things had been worked out. This is a lovely picture of how meeting with others should refresh and encourage us. How do you feel after visiting church? What might you do to ensure you leave feeling delighted, refreshed, encouraged and confident?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that in his wisdom he has gathered us as his people so that we might encourage one another. Pray that we might invest in others and share of ourselves so that we are all built up in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation. 2 Corinthians 7:10

Say this week's verse together as a family, first in a sad and then in a refreshed tone!

WEEK 9: September 22-28

DAY 1

INTRO:

Who do you think of as being generous?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-7

¹ And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. ⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. ⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

EXPLORE:

Who did Paul see as being generous? (*The Macedonian churches*)

Why was this? (*Despite going through a severe trial and being extremely poor they pleaded with Paul to give money to others... and they gave even beyond their ability!*)

What did Paul urge the Corinthians to do? (*Follow their example & excel at being generous*)

APPLY:

In Romans 15:26 Paul referred to a collection he was taking up for the poor in Jerusalem. Here we learn that the Macedonian churches had given very generously to this collection. Paul urged the Corinthian church to follow their example and excel at being generous. How do you go in this area? Do you think anyone would call you a generous person?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he is generous, for he delights to give us every good thing. Pray that we might follow his example and the example of his people and be generous too.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Write the words of this week's verse onto small scraps of paper and stick them onto coins. Get your family to rearrange the coins so that they can begin to learn this week's verse.

WEEK 9: September 22-28

DAY 2

INTRO:

How do you know if someone loves you?

RECAP:

What did Paul encourage the Corinthians to excel in?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 2:8-12

⁸I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. ¹⁰And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. ¹²For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

EXPLORE:

How was Paul testing the sincerity of the Corinthians' love? *(By seeing if they would give money as they had promised)*

What had Jesus done in his love? *(He had become poor so that the Corinthians might become rich)*

Why did Paul say God would accept their gift? *(If they gave it willingly and according to what they had God would find it acceptable)*

APPLY:

This is quite the test! Paul would be convinced of the Corinthians' love if their giving equalled their desire to be generous! If your love for God and his people was tested by your generosity how would you fare?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that our Lord Jesus gave up his riches in heaven to become poor so that we might be enriched in every way. Pray that our desire to give might be inspired by Christ's generosity and that our giving might accord with how much we have.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Do you believe this week's verse? Write it on your calendar or in your diary over the month of October, so that as opportunities arise to be generous you are challenged to trust in the Lord's provision to do so.

WEEK 9: September 22-28

DAY 3

INTRO:

What good things has God given you?

RECAP:

What love test did Paul give the Corinthians?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11

⁶Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

EXPLORE:

Why has God blessed us abundantly? *(So that in all things, at all times, because we have all we need, we will be able to abound in every good work)*

Why does God supply and increase what we have? *(To increase our righteousness)*

Why have we been made rich? *(So that we can be generous on every occasion)*

APPLY:

In this passage Paul reminds the Corinthians of the same thing in a few different ways: the reason we have the good things we enjoy is so that we can be generous on every occasion to the glory of God. How do you feel about giving? Do you see it as a chance to increase your righteousness and praise to the Lord, or is it something with which you struggle?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that just as he provides seed for farmers to grow a crop so he provides good things to us so that we might harvest righteousness. Pray that God will bless us abundantly, not just with good things, but with a generous heart.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.

2 Corinthians 9:11

Write out this week's verse onto a small card and keep it in your wallet or purse next to your money and cards!

WEEK 10: September 29-October 5

DAY 1

INTRO:

Imagine for a moment that you were in a war and had to fight. What weapon would you choose to use?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-5

¹By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! ²I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. ³For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ⁴The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

EXPLORE:

What weapons didn't Paul use? (*The weapons of the world*)

What did Paul's weapons have power from God to do? (*Demolish strongholds; that is, as an apostle Paul demolished arguments against the knowledge of God*)

Why did Paul engage in this battle? (*He aimed to capture every thought to make it obedient to Christ*)

APPLY:

Paul reveals part of his goal in writing this letter to the Corinthians in these verses. He has been using the gospel of Jesus to demolish arguments so that every thought would become obedient to Christ. What a great battle to join! How often do you wage war against your thoughts to double check they are in line with the gospel?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has given us power in the gospel to battle against ungodliness. Pray that we might wage war, not as the world does, but in order to become more obedient to his Son.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You are judging by appearances. 2 Corinthians 10:7

Draw some different weapons and write on them this week's verse so that your family can assemble the verse in the correct order and begin to learn it.

WEEK 10: September 29-October 5

DAY 2

INTRO:

Try to judge your height and weight, then measure them to see how close you got!

RECAP:

In what war was Paul fighting?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 10:7-12

⁷You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. ⁸So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. ⁹I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁰For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." ¹¹Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present. ¹²We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

EXPLORE:

What were the Corinthians judging? (*By appearance*)

What conclusion did they reach about Paul? (*They thought he talked big in his letters but wasn't very impressive in person*)

Who did Paul not want to compare himself? (*To some people among the Corinthians who measured themselves and congratulated themselves on the result*)

APPLY:

Paul starts to approach the heart of his problem with the Corinthians here. It seems they have continued to compare him with other teachers and found him lacking. Paul points out that they are simply judging by appearance, rather than the gospel. The gospel teaches us that God's power is seen in our weaknesses, and so he doesn't mind that he appears weak to the Corinthians! Judging by appearances is something with which we all might struggle at different times.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father he looks at our heart and not at our appearance. Pray that we might follow his example and be more concerned with how we measure up to the gospel.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You are judging by appearances. 2 Corinthians 10:7

Draw a picture of yourself and then add a heart shape over your chest. Write in it this week's verse.

WEEK 10: September 29-October 5

DAY 3

INTRO:

Get every family member to name at least one superhero who wears a mask. Can you work together to name the person under the mask?

RECAP:

How were the Corinthians judging Paul?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 11:4-6, 13-15

⁴If someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.⁵I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."⁶I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

¹³ Such people are actually false apostles. They are deceitful, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

EXPLORE:

To whom were the Corinthians comparing Paul? (*Some super-apostles*)

What made Paul look weak compared to these people? (*He was untrained as a speaker*)

What did Paul say these people really were under their masks? (*They were deceitful, false apostles, who didn't serve righteousness because they preached a different gospel*)

APPLY:

More about the Corinthian church is revealed in these verses. The people in it had rejected Paul for others who appeared to be better speakers and more successful in their ministry. Paul showed that these people weren't actually servants of Jesus but of Satan, for they preached a different gospel (verse 4). Who do you listen to, and what do you believe? Are you willing to follow Jesus into suffering, or would you prefer to be successful?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has warned us clearly that everyone who follows Jesus will suffer (2 Timothy 3:12). Pray that we will not just seek success and comfort but be willing to listen to and follow Jesus, wherever that may take us.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

You are judging by appearances. 2 Corinthians 10:7

Make a mask and write on the inside of it this week's verse.

WEEK 11: October 6-12

DAY 1

INTRO:

If someone asked if you served Jesus what would you point to in your life to show the answer was 'yes'?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 11:21-28

²¹ Permit me for a moment to speak as a fool. If others are boasting, I will boast too. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more: I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. ²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the thirty-nine lashes, ²⁵ three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. ²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, bandits, my fellow Jews, and from Gentiles. I have been in danger in the city, in the country, at sea and from false believers. ²⁷ I have laboured and toiled and have often gone without sleep. I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food. I have been cold and naked. ²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

EXPLORE:

What did Paul point to in his life as evidence that he served Jesus? (*His suffering*)

How did Paul feel about boasting in this way? (*He felt like a fool; like he was out of his mind*)

Why then did he do it? (*Because others were boasting in their achievements (v21)*)

APPLY:

This seems like a very strange passage! As we try to understand it, it is helpful to remember that the Corinthians were rejecting Paul for others who seemed to be better. These 'super-apostles' were boasting of all their achievements, and so Paul, trying to be funny, points out that he can boast too. However his list of achievements are ridiculous! He highlights all the ways that he has followed Jesus by suffering in his name (Acts 9:16).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has saved us so that we can serve him. Pray that we might be willing to do this even when it means suffering as Jesus did.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." **2 Cor 12:9**

This week's verse is a great one to remember! Design a poster to display it so that you can start to learn it.

WEEK 11: October 6-12

DAY 2

INTRO:

What things have you done of which you are proud?

RECAP:

What did Paul boast about to show he served Jesus?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:6-9

⁶Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I could simply speak the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say ⁷or because of the surpassingly great revelations I have seen. Rather, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

EXPLORE:

If Paul chose to boast like the super-apostles, how would he do so? *(Simply by telling the truth of what he had done, said or seen)*

What kept him from doing so? *(He had been given a 'thorn in his flesh, a messenger of Satan', that kept him from becoming proud)*

Why weren't Paul's prayers to have it removed answered? *(The Lord said that his power would be seen to be most clearly working in Paul while he remained weak)*

APPLY:

The Lord Jesus had revealed some amazing things to Paul but he saw no need to boast about such things. Instead Paul understood that when he was weak Christ's power in him was seen more clearly. What might happen if we were more keen to speak to others around us about the power of the Lord Jesus than about the things we have done? In the week ahead practice witnessing for Jesus rather than speaking about what you have done and see what results!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that his grace is sufficient for us. Pray that we will believe this enough to speak about Jesus rather than ourselves like everyone else does.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." **2 Cor 12:9**

Come up with actions to help you remember this week's verse.

WEEK 11: October 6-12

DAY 3

INTRO:

Which of the miracles in the bible do you think is the most impressive?

RECAP:

Why didn't Paul boast about some of the things he had seen and done?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:11-12

¹¹I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "super-apostles". ¹²I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.

EXPLORE:

How did Paul feel the Corinthians should have acted towards him? (*They should have commended him*)

Why did he feel this? (*Paul had demonstrated he was a true apostle*)

How had Paul demonstrated he was an apostle? (*He had performed signs, wonders and miracles among them*)

APPLY:

Paul had previously pointed out to the Corinthians that God's power was seen most clearly through his weaknesses. This is definitely the case when he speaks of the miracles he did. That such a weak, seemingly powerless man could do miracles shows the power of God (Romans 15:19)!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has power to achieve extraordinary things through weak people like us. Pray that we might trust his power and be willing to be used by the Lord to achieve his plans and purposes as we live for and speak out for him.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." **2 Cor 12:9**

Use this week's verse as a basis to praise God that he can use us in Mission 2020.

WEEK 12: October 13-19

DAY 1

INTRO:

Who will visit you or who will you visit over the next month? What are you particularly looking forward to about this visit?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 13:1-4

¹This will be my third visit to you. "Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." ²I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, ³since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak in Christ, yet by God's power we will live with him

EXPLORE:

What did Paul want to repeat before he came to visit the Corinthians? (*A warning*)

What was he intending to do when he visited? (*Deal with those who were sinning*)

What would this prove? (*That Christ was speaking through Paul*)

APPLY:

Paul had spoken honestly and vulnerably in his letter because he wanted to assure the Corinthians of his love. However this may have made his enemies think he was weak. He therefore warned them that when he arrived he would deal powerfully with sin. Knowing when to share our weaknesses and when to be a strong leader can be difficult. Which do you prefer to do? When might you get the balance wrong?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus took on our weaknesses while still living by God's power. Pray that we might follow his example and be both kind and courageous.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are weak in Christ, yet by God's power we will live. **2 Corinthians 13:4**

Pretend you are an army drill sergeant. Chant this week's verse in call-and-response style as you command your family to march.

WEEK 12: October 13-19

DAY 2

INTRO:

What was the last test you had to do? How did you go with it?

RECAP:

What would Paul do when he arrived in Corinth?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-10

⁵Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? ⁶And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. ⁷Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. ⁸For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. ¹⁰This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

EXPLORE:

Since the Corinthians were testing Paul, what test did he want them to do? (*Test themselves to see whether Christ lived in them*)

In verse 7 what did he expect the result of this test to be? (*They would show that Christ lived in them by doing right*)

Why did he hope this would happen? (*So that when Paul arrived he could build them up rather than having to deal with their sin*)

APPLY:

Tests are something we rarely look forward to, whether they be spelling tests, end-of-year exams or health tests. However in light of their behaviour Paul asked the Corinthians to test themselves to see whether Jesus really lived in them. We should do the same test: do your words and actions show that you are in the faith, or do you fail the test?

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Christ Jesus has paid for our sins once and for all. Pray that we will show this by doing what is right through the power of the Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are weak in Christ, yet by God's power we will live. 2 Corinthians 13:4

Say this week's verse as you adopt different bodybuilding poses!

WEEK 12: October 13-19

DAY 3

INTRO:

Have you ever had to say a hard goodbye? Who was it to, and why was it hard?

RECAP:

What did the rest of Israel do to the people of the tribe of Benjamin?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-14

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³ All God's people here send their greetings. 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.

EXPLORE:

What was Paul trying to get the Corinthians to strive towards in verse 11? (*Being a loving community*)

How did he say this would be possible? (*Our God of love and peace will be with us*)

In verse 14 what did Paul wish the church would experience? (*Christ's generosity, God's love and that they would partner together in the power of the Spirit*)

APPLY:

Paul's final words in this letter are some of the most famous ones in the bible, for many church services traditionally finish with these words. The verses around it explain that our hope for real community in this world depend upon the God of peace, love, favour and true intimacy. We need to turn these verses into a regular prayer for the transformation of our world!

PRAY:

Praise God that he is loving, kind and peaceful. Pray that with the power he provides we in the church might restore broken relationships, encourage one another, be united in our thinking and live at peace with one another.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

We are weak in Christ, yet by God's power we will live. 2 Corinthians 13:4

Turn this week's verse into a prayer, asking God to so fill us with his Holy Spirit that we might be the people he has created us to be.

