

LifeGroup Questions

Based On: 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4

April 10, 2016

Overview:

Where do you find joy? In 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4 we read that Paul's joy as an apostle is connected with the Corinthian church. He was planning on going back to the church and disciplining those corrupting the church. Paul decided not to return because he knew doing so would cause a lot of pain within the church and within himself. It wasn't that he didn't have the authority or courage, it was that he wanted them the chance to repent.

Paul found joy in the faith of the Corinthian church. He rejoiced when the church was united and following God. It must have taken great restraint for Paul not to travel to Corinth and confront them. Paul's love for the Corinthians extended beyond his position of authority and being right.

How does this translate in today's world? We live in a society where most people cannot see beyond themselves. Their interests, their joy, their desire to be right comes before anything or anyone else. Imagine having such a deep love for someone that you would forgo your position of authority or being right to see them grow in their faith. It seems like today a lot of believers like being right and find joy in telling those outside the church they are wrong.

The challenge comes when believers seek the interests of God rather than their own self-interest. This fight with self-interest occurs in almost every arena of life. Relationships cannot survive if they are in a constant state of correction. Even when you are right and have the authority sometimes the best thing to do is extend mercy. This will not only help in your daily relationships but it could just be how an unbeliever sees Christ in you.

Bible Study: 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:4

1. Discuss what any relationship would look like if it was in a constant state of correction.
2. What steps can you take to show restraint when you have both the authority and position of being right to correct someone else?
3. At some point all relationships encounter confrontation. This can be a difficult path to take. "It is easier to gloss over the problems with others, to cover them up, to pretend that they do not exist, or to write problem people off and terminate the relationship."¹ How do you know when it is time to confront or time to show mercy?
4. Warren Wiersbe once said: "Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." In your daily relationships how do you balance love and truth?
5. Paul was willing to deny himself the immediate pleasure of his own vindication for the greater satisfaction of seeing the Corinthians experience the joy of a renewed faith.² Discuss a time when you denied yourself for the benefit of a relationship or someone else's joy.
6. Believers can deal with two types of confrontation. You can confront someone to try and solve a problem/disagreement or you can confront someone to try and force your opinion on them. What does healthy confrontation look like?

¹ Garland, D. E. (1999). *2 Corinthians* (Vol. 29, p. 115). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

² Hafemann, S. J. (2000). *2 Corinthians* (pp. 87–88). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

7. Think of an issue in a relationship you have needed to deal with. What steps can you take this next week to make positive progress to achieving a resolution?