

# Small Group Guide: 2 Corinthians

## 12:14-13:14

### "Examine Your Faith & Walk in Unity"

#### *2 Corinthians 12:14-13:14*

### Key Scripture

**2 Corinthians 13:5** - "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless you are indeed disqualified."

### Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

Paul concludes his letter to the Corinthians with both firmness and compassion. Despite their immaturity and struggles, he doesn't give up on them. He calls them to self-examination, repentance, and unity. Paul's ministry demonstrates that true spiritual leadership serves others humbly while holding them accountable to truth. The sermon challenges us to examine our own faith and ensure Christ is truly alive and working in us.

### Discussion Questions

#### Section 1: Paul's Heart for Ministry (15-20 minutes)

- 1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:14-15.** Paul says he will "gladly spend and be spent" for the Corinthians even though "the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved."
  - What does this reveal about Paul's motivation for ministry?
  - Have you ever continued to serve someone even when it wasn't appreciated? What kept you going?
- 2.** Paul didn't charge the Corinthians for his ministry because they were spiritually immature.

- When might it be wise to adjust our approach based on someone's spiritual maturity?
  - How can we discern when someone isn't ready for certain spiritual truths?
3. Pastor Jerry mentioned, "We can't do ministry if we wear our heart on our sleeve."
- What does this mean practically?
  - How do we balance being authentic and vulnerable while not being derailed by criticism?

## Section 2: Self-Examination (20-25 minutes)

4. **Read 2 Corinthians 13:5 again.** Paul commands, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith."
- Why is self-examination so important?
  - What's the difference between healthy self-examination and unhealthy doubt?
5. The message listed several "false indicators" of faith:
- Going to church regularly
  - Being raised in a Christian home
  - Getting baptized
  - Owning Christian merchandise
6. **Discuss:** Why aren't these things sufficient proof of genuine faith? What ARE the true indicators that Christ is alive in us?
7. **Personal Reflection (allow silence):** Take 2-3 minutes of quiet time to honestly ask yourself:
- Is Christ truly alive in me?
  - Is my life being transformed by His Word and Spirit?
  - Do I have genuine love for others, or is my focus primarily on myself?
8. **After reflection:** Would anyone like to share what God revealed to you? (No pressure—only if comfortable)
9. Pastor Jerry mentioned that conviction when we sin is an indicator of the Holy Spirit's presence.
- How does conviction differ from condemnation?

- Share about a time when the Holy Spirit convicted you about something. How did you respond?

### **Section 3: Confession and Repentance (15-20 minutes)**

- 10. Read 2 Corinthians 12:21.** Paul feared finding un-repentant sin when he visited.
  - What does true repentance look like? (The sermon defined it as "turning 180 degrees")
  - Why is confession without repentance ineffective?
- 11.** The pastor said, "We make provision for our flesh" by:
  - Looking at things we shouldn't on our phones
  - Going places where ungodly things happen
  - Spending time with people who pull us away from God
- 12. Discuss:** What are some practical ways we can stop making provision for the flesh in these areas?
- 13. Application:** Is there an area in your life where you've confessed sin repeatedly but haven't truly repented (turned away from it)? What would genuine repentance look like in that situation?

### **Section 4: Unity and Maturity (15-20 minutes)**

- 14. Read 2 Corinthians 13:11.** Paul calls them to "be of one mind" and "live in peace."
  - Why is unity so important in the body of Christ?
  - What destroys unity in a church or small group?
- 15.** Paul wanted the Corinthians to self-correct before he arrived so he could fellowship with them instead of disciplining them.
  - How does this apply to our relationships with one another?
  - What role should accountability play in our spiritual growth?
- 16.** The sermon emphasized that spiritual maturity involves:
  - Bearing fruit
  - Walking in humility
  - Serving others
  - Being transformed by God's Word

**Discuss:** In which of these areas do you most need to grow? How can this group support you?

## Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Don't give up on yourself or others when there's spiritual struggle** - God continues His work in us until we meet Him face to face.
- ✓ **Examine your faith honestly** - Make sure your faith is genuine and producing fruit, not just based on external religious activities.
- ✓ **True repentance means turning away from sin** - Confession without heart change won't transform our lives.
- ✓ **Ministry motivation matters** - Serve "as unto the Lord" rather than for people's approval.
- ✓ **Unity requires humility** - We must be willing to put others first and seek the same vision and mind.
- ✓ **Spiritual growth requires God's Word, His Spirit, and fellowship** - We can't mature in isolation.

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

1. **Self-Examination:** Set aside 30 minutes for honest prayer and reflection. Ask God to reveal areas where you need to grow and whether your faith is genuine and producing fruit.
2. **Repentance Check:** Identify one area where you've been confessing sin but not truly repenting. Make a concrete plan to turn away from that sin (remove temptation, add accountability, etc.).

3. **Stop Making Provision for the Flesh:** Identify one way you're making provision for sin and take action to eliminate it (delete an app, change a routine, avoid a location, etc.).
4. **Encourage Someone:** Think of someone in ministry or in this group who serves faithfully. Reach out to encourage them this week, letting them know you see and appreciate their service.
5. **Unity Builder:** If there's tension between you and another believer, take the initiative to pursue peace and reconciliation this week.

## **Prayer Requests & Closing Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

- Share prayer requests related to today's discussion
- Pray for one another's areas of needed growth
- Pray for genuine faith and transformed lives
- Pray for unity in the body of Christ
- Pray for those who may be unsure of their salvation

### **Closing Benediction (from 2 Corinthians 13:14):**

*"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen."*