



## A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of May 28, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

### II Corinthians 7:2-4 *"Overflowing with Joy"*

<sup>2</sup>Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. <sup>3</sup>I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die

together and to live together. <sup>4</sup>I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.

- When do you feel tempted to close your heart to others? To God?
- Read II Corinthians 7:2. Paul gives three reasons why the Corinthians should receive him. What are they? Why would Paul be making this appeal?
- Read II Corinthians 7:3-4. How does Paul see and describe his relationship with the Corinthian church? What is the reason for Paul's boldness?
- Remember that Paul has had a difficult history with the Corinthians, and they have struggled with receiving him and his ministry. In this section, Paul takes remarkable initiative toward the church, and it is worth carefully considering how he finds power to love them:
  - What is the reason for Paul's boldness?
  - What is the reason for Paul's pride?
  - What is the reason for Paul's comfort?
  - What is the reason for Paul's joy?
- Re-read today's Scripture passage aloud and use it as a guide to prayer for your group:
  - Ask God for humility and power to love your brothers and sisters in Christ.
  - Ask the Holy Spirit for strength to take initiative toward those with whom we have difficult relationships.
  - Thank Jesus that He loved His people—even when we were His enemies. Wonder that He takes joy in His church.

*Questions about this week's study guide? Contact Kevin Greene, [kevin@wepc.org](mailto:kevin@wepc.org)  
To hear sermons and access past study guides visit [www.wepc.org/archivedsermons](http://www.wepc.org/archivedsermons)*

## Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on II Corinthians 7:2-4

- Two things jump out in this text:
- What are our relationships like?
- Joy, even overflowing joy, in the face of affliction, Is it possible?
- What is the nature of relationships?
- We often think in terms that are not fully accurate or at least, not fully Biblical.
- Paul is God's man. He has remarkable and almost immeasurable authority. We would be tempted to think that he is the 'dominant' person in his relationship with the Corinthians. This dominance is not what we might think.
- "In the present context, with Paul's words of praise the Corinthians, something remarkable has taken place. The apostle and his church have exchanged roles. Normally, it is the Apostle who first receives comfort in affliction so that he can give it forth to others (1:3-7). In the first instance, the Corinthians are the receivers of comfort from the Apostle. At this moment, however, the apostle has received comfort from them. They have been God's tools and agents in the life of the Apostle. Among Christians (and indeed, in the world), there are no absolute givers and no absolute receivers. God alone in Christ remains the absolute giver. We live in changing roles of receiving and giving, giving and receiving. Of course, the reciprocity may not take the form it does with Paul and the Corinthians; often we receive in order to give forth to others, and not to one who has given to us. In speaking in this way to the Corinthians, Paul elevates them remarkably. He does not leave them entrapped in a relationship of dominance and dependence, which they would have known quite well in Greco-Roman society." (*Mark Seifrid*)
- Take an inventory of your relationships.
- Don't be tempted by this to grow bitter in your relationships. "I am always giving, and you never give". Rather, ask why? Have I put myself in a position where I 'dominate' the relationship by being the sole giver? Is my pride getting in the way of real relationship? Can I allow others not only the freedom to give to me, but the freedom to give what they have, and not what I might demand?
- What is joy and how is it a fundamental marker of my life in Christ, even in the midst of intense affliction and disappointment?
- Joy is the settled assurance that there is a God who is in control of all the details of my life. This God is not just sovereignly in control, but that He loves me. It is the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be made not just right, but beautiful.
- This stands as true even when there are things going on in my life when it seems like this is not true.
- Joy and grief are not binary, but ongoing realities in this life.
- Sometimes, joy overtakes us in the middle of trouble and it resolves our sadness.
- Most of the time, however, joy resides with sadness.
- Joy and happiness will be become one, in glory.
- This is ultimately the thing that God created us for, and what we have been redeemed for.