

2 Corinthians: Joy, Peace, and Maturity

[2 Corinthians 13:11-14](#)

Throughout this letter to the church at Corinth, Paul has exposed and corrected their sin. As he concludes, he exhorts the believers to be joyful, grow to maturity, encourage each other, and live in harmony and peace. As they align themselves with God's purposes and come under his authority, he will bless them with grace, love, and the fellowship of the Spirit.

Application

1. Our joy and the gospel are inextricably linked. How does the cross act as a calibrating weight in your life during both difficult and peaceful times? When you struggle to find joy, how can you come back to the gospel?
2. Growing in maturity is a personal choice. We can measure our maturity by our willingness to come under authority, own our sin, and change our lives. In which of these areas do you need to grow?
3. Offering encouragement is much more than extending mercy—we must press in and challenge each other to move towards life change. How can you grow in encouraging others? How can you grow in receiving encouragement?
4. It's tempting for us to elevate our personal agenda above the gospel. How should the gospel impact our relationship with others who disagree with us on secondary or amoral issues? How can you grow in living harmoniously with such people in your life?

Key Points

- As we come to the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul pushes us to make a choice—do we or do we not want to be God's people? While following God is not easy, he is always faithful to care for us.
- One mark of a true believer is joy. Because the cross has dealt with our sinful past and we have a future hope of eternity with God, we can be joyful at all times and in all circumstances.
- While the church is the context in which we find the resources to grow, we must own our personal growth by fully engaging the church in every way available.

- Our culture often portrays encouragement as extending mercy. However, biblical encouragement means to come alongside, exhort, and move someone to change.
- Uniformity is not the same as harmony and peace. We must seek to place the gospel and our relationships with each other above our own personal agenda.
- In the process of pursuing joy, encouragement, maturity, and harmony, we find God's faithful presence, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit.