

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible. The person is wearing a grey button-down shirt. The Bible is open to a page with text. The lighting is warm and soft. The text is overlaid on the image.

# NEW TESTAMENT

*in a year - May*

*Daily Bible Reading Plan*

**MAY 1**

**1 COR 15:1-34**

**DONE**

One group at Corinth did not believe in life after death at all, and another did not believe in the resurrection of the body. In this classic passage Paul deals with both groups.

1. What strikes you about the content and the proclamation of the gospel as summarized in verses 1-4? What benefits does it offer to men, and how is this benefit to be enjoyed? Cf. 1 Tim 1:15.
2. What is the significance of the evidence that Paul marshals in verses 5-11 for the resurrection of Christ? What for Christians are the five far-reaching consequences of denying the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead? See verses 12-19. Does death set any limit to your hope in Christ?
3. What are to be the full and final consequences of the resurrection of Christ? Of what ultimate consummation is it the promise and pledge? Why are Christians able triumphantly to face death for Christ's sake?

**MAY 2**

**1 COR 15:35-58**

**DONE**

1. What does the analogy of the seed suggest about the relation between our present natural body and our future spiritual body? In what ways will the latter be different from the former? What does verse 38b also imply?
2. What will take place when Christ comes again? Cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18. In view of this, what should be the character of our present life and service?

**MAY 3**

**1 COR 16**

**DONE**

1. Verse 1: 'The collection for God's people'. Paul was concerned about a fund that he had initiated among the Gentile churches to aid the poor of the church in Jerusalem. What can we learn from his practical directions about the collection and sending of this money?
2. What can we learn from this chapter about the plans, movement and ministry of Christian workers? How can we help such people to do 'the work of the Lord' more effectively?
3. How were the five commands of verses 13-14 particularly relevant for the church at Corinth as we know it from this letter? Examine your own life in order to discover in what ways you, too, need to obey these commands.

## **EPISTLE OF 2 CORINTHIANS**

This letter was written from Macedonia after Paul had left Ephesus (Acts 20:1-2). Paul had met Titus on his return from a mission to Corinth, and the report which Titus gave greatly relieved Paul's anxieties, especially in regard to the church's favorable reception of, and action upon, a sever letter that Paul had written to them (2:3-4 and 7:5-16). But there were still other matters that gave Paul much concern. There was a minority in the church opposed to him, and their influence had been strengthened by the arrival of Jewish Christians who claimed apostolic rank, and sought to undermine Paul's

authority by making false insinuations against him.

This is the most personal of Paul's letters to the churches, for he felt deeply wounded by the doubts cast on his personal integrity, his love for those whom he had won for Christ, and the validity of his apostleship. But Paul also knew that the attacks against him by his enemies were really attacks against the gospel (11:1-5). Hence the vehemence of his defense.

The book can be divided as follows:

- I. Introduction (1:1-2)
- II. The Conciliation (1:3 – 7:16)
- III. The Collection (8-9)
- IV. The Confirmation (10:1 – 13:10)
- V. The Conclusion (13:11-14)

**MAY 4**

**2 COR 1:1-11**

**DONE**

1. After a formal greeting and introduction, Paul opens his letter on a note of praise. What particular aspects of God's character does Paul give praise for? Why do you think these should be particularly singled out in this letter? Can we learn from Paul's experiences any new lessons about the Christian in his personal relationship with God?
2. What reasons does Paul give in this passage for wanting the Corinthians to be fully aware of the extent of his sufferings? What spiritual gain would they get from his suffering (verse 6)? What part are they to play, and with what results (verse 11)?
3. Compare the formal greeting of this letter with similar ones in other epistles (for example Gal 1:1). On what ground does Paul rest his claim to apostleship? How does he describe the church in Corinth in spite of its defects? What blessings does he ask for its members? How far are these blessings real to you?

**MAY 5**

**2 COR 1:12 – 2:17**

**DONE**

1. To what does Paul's conscience bear witness regarding his relations: (1) with the world, and (2) with fellow believers? Can you say the same?
2. Paul makes the remarkable claim that his reliability is to be compared with the eternal faithfulness of God. What does he tell us here about God's faithfulness? What three special functions of the Holy Spirit are referred to in verses 21-22?

There had been a gross case of immorality in the church at Corinth (1 Cor 5:1) and Paul had written strongly about it. Now that the church had dealt with the sin, and the man had apparently repented, Paul now counsels that the offender be forgiven (2:5-11).

3. What can we learn from the spirit in which Paul administered discipline? What can we learn from his attitude to the situation in Corinth (1:24, 2:4), and from the instructions he gave to the Corinthi-

an Christians, regarding discipline and forgiveness? In what ways can a scandal in church life give Satan an advantage?

4. Does the Word of God promise that faithful preaching of the gospel will win all who hear it? How does Paul describe his own experience in this regard? Cf. 4:4.

**MAY 6**

**2 COR 3:1 – 4:6**

**DONE**

The intruders at Corinth (see introduction) made much, we may gather, of letters of recommendation that they carried (cf. Acts 18:27), and may have said, or implied, that Paul did not possess such, though he was very ready to commend himself (3:1).

1. In 3:6-11, the old and new covenants are contrasted. List the ways in which the new covenant is shown to be superior to the old.

2. In this passage Paul describes his own confidence in the work he is doing. What grounds for confidence does he find: (1) in the effects of preaching, and (2) in the nature of his gospel? See 3:1-5 and 4:1-6.

**MAY 7**

**2 COR 4:7 - 5:10**

**DONE**

1. Why has God placed the 'treasure' of 4:6 in a weak vessel – the earthen vessel of man's frail human nature? How does this arrangement work out in actual experience? See 4:7-12. How do present afflictions appear to the eye of faith, and what prospect is seen at the end? See 4:13-18.

2. In 5:1-4 Paul defines one aspect of the future prospect more closely. What awaits him after death? Or, if Christ should come first, as would be Paul's desire (verse 4), what awaits him at his coming? How is Paul sure that this prospect is no mirage, and what effect has it on his present aim? See verses 5-10.

**MAY 8**

**2 COR 5:11 – 6:10**

**DONE**

1. What great motive dominated Paul's life, and to what conclusion did it lead him? See verses 14-17.

2. 5:18 – 6:2. What does Paul say God: (a) has done in Christ and (2) now purposes to do through us? What ought we to tell men, and to beseech him to do, in order to fulfill our God given task?

3. Examine the list of twenty-eight particulars in which Paul describes the kind of life and experience into which the acceptance of Christ and of Christ's commission led him. To what extent do you find that this describes your life as a Christian?

**MAY 9**

**2 COR 6:11 – 7:16**

**DONE**

1. In what ways does Paul show in 6:14-16 that Christians must be a separated people? What arguments does he use in 6:16 – 7:1 to lead us to separate ourselves completely from all that defiles, and to endeavor wholeheartedly to make our holiness perfect? Are you willing to test your friend-

ships and your inmost purposes by this passage? Cf. Ps 139:23-24.

2. In what ways does Paul convey the strength of his feelings about the Corinthian Christians and their behavior? What two kinds of sorrow for sin are distinguished here: (1) in their nature, and (2) in their result? By what signs did the Corinthians show that they are genuinely penitent?

**MAY 10**

**2 COR 8:1-15**

**DONE**

Chapters 8 and 9 form the second section of the letter (see introduction), which relates to the fund which Paul was collecting from the Gentile churches for the poor church in Jerusalem. It lay very near to his heart, and had great importance in his eyes, as a demonstration of the oneness of all believers as members of one body in Christ.

1. In what condition were the churches of Macedonia at this time in regard to their circumstances? Yet what was their spiritual attitude, and in what four ways did it show itself? To what does Paul ascribe it?

2. What is the chief point in the appeal that Paul makes in verses 7-15? Gather out the other points which he makes, and consider them in their application to our own giving.

**MAY 11**

**2 COR 8:16 – 9:15**

**DONE**

Today's portion falls into two parts. First, in 8:16-24, Paul explains why he is sending Titus and two others to Corinth, and gives them his warm commendation. Second, in chapter 9, he shows the blessings of cheerful and generous giving.

1. What can we learn from Paul's example of the duty of giving praise where praise is due? What picture do you have of the personalities of the Christian workers he describes?

2. What lessons do we learn here about handling money? What kinds of giving does God value? What reward does he give?

**MAY 12**

**2 COR 10**

**DONE**

In this third section of the letter, Paul has specially in view the disaffected minority, who were being led astray by visiting preachers, who were enemies of Paul and of the gospel. His desire is to destroy the influence of these men, so that his visit, when it comes, may not be one of strife and conflict. In this chapter he twice refers to a charge, which his enemies made against him (10:1 and 10), that while he might be able to write vigorous letters from a distance, he was weak and ineffective when present in person. Paul answers that he has powerful weapons at his command, and that the church in Corinth falls within the sphere of his God-given authority.

1. Consider Paul's description of his ministry as a warfare (verses 3-6). What is the aim he has in view? What fortresses have to be captured, and how is victory achieved? Have you known in your own experience: (1) of lawless elements in your own thought-life brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and (2) of winning such victories for Christ in the thought-life of others?

2. What does Paul claim for himself in verses 7-16, and what hope for future service does he express? Cf. Rom 12:3, 15:18-24. What is the only form of commendation in which he is interested?

**MAY 13**

**2 COR 11:1 – 12:10**

**DONE**

1. Why was Paul so concerned for the Corinthian Christians? See verses 1-4 and Gal 1:6-10. On what two grounds was he amazed that they should so readily tolerate these false teachers? See verses 4 and 19-20. But see also verses 13-15. What warning for our own day can be drawn from what Paul says about the false teachers, their methods, and their message? Is 'another Jesus' preached today?
2. Follow Paul through the experiences which he describes. In particular let your imagination dwell clause by clause on the list of suffering in verses 23-29. Why do you think Paul felt it necessary to 'boast' of his experiences?
3. Why did Paul believe he was given a 'thorn in the flesh'? What did Paul do about this 'thorn' and with what result? Notice the force of the present tense in the Lord's reply. What lessons did Paul learn that changed his whole attitude to trial? Have we begun to understand these things? Cf. Rom 5:3-5 and 1 Pet 4:14.

**MAY 14**

**2 COR 12:11-21**

**DONE**

1. Paul again summarizes his past ministry in Corinth and his attitude towards the Christians there. What accusations is he meeting in this passage and how does he answer them? What impresses you most as showing the measure of his Christ-likeness? In answering this question bear in mind how deeply he has been wronged by the ingratitude and suspicion of the church.
2. In verses 20-21 what anxieties does Paul have over the church in Corinth? What can we learn from this about our responsibility for younger Christians?

**MAY 15**

**2 COR 13**

**DONE**

1. What effect has Paul's love for the Corinthians on his attitude to their sin? In answering consider the evidence of both verses 1-6 and verses 7-10. See also 12:20-21.
2. Consider how closely related the exhortations and promises of verse 11 are to the teaching of the whole letter.
3. Consider how the prayer of verse 14 sums up our Christian heritage, and gives the complete solution to our threefold need – our sin, sorrow and weakness.

**MAY 16**

**ROMANS 14**

**DONE**

1. 'A Christian man is a most free lord of all, subject to none' (Luther). What do verses 1-12 teach about Christian liberty?
2. 'A Christian man is a most dutiful servant of all, subject to all' (Luther). For what reasons should Christian liberty be qualified? What are the most important things to be preserved at all costs in the Christian community?

3. If in doubt about the lawfulness of a thing, can we do it because we see other true Christian people doing it? If not, why not?

**MAY 17**

**ROMANS 15**

**DONE**

1. The counsel given in verses 1-2 is by no means easy to follow. What three sources of help and encouragement are suggested in verses 3-5?
2. What does following Christ's example involved (verses 7-12)?
3. What should characterize the life of the Christian church? See verses 2, 5-7, 13.
4. How does Paul in verses 15-21 describe his work – in relation to its nature, scope, power and results? How far is this description applicable to our own work in connection with the gospel?

**MAY 18**

**ROMANS 16:1-16**

**DONE**

1. Verse 1 – The name Phoebe, being that of a goddess, suggests that Phoebe had a heathen background. Cenchrea, the eastern port of Corinth, was not an easy place in which to live as a Christian. What can we learn about Phoebe from her name and the place where she lived, from the description of her as a 'sister' and 'deaconess of the church', and from the service that she rendered?
2. Looking down the list of names, note the references to: (1) diligent service, (2) sufferings borne for Christ, and (3) Christian character. Cf. 2 Cor 5:9-10.
3. How often do you find the phrase 'in the Lord' or 'in Christ Jesus' or 'in Christ'? Also notice all the different connotations in which it is used. What significance do you attach to the phrase?

**MAY 19**

**ROMANS 16:17-27**

**DONE**

1. How can perverters of the Gospel be recognized? Cf. 1 Tim 6:3; Matt 7:15-20. How can we safeguard against them? Cf. 2 John 10; 2 Tim 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.
2. How is God described? How does the present age differ from all that went before? What is the one all-important end to be achieved? Cf 1:5. What is the method to be adopted?

**MAY 20**

**1 COR 1:1-17**

**DONE**

1. Paul is preparing to deal with various divisive factors in the life of the church at Corinth. What is significant, therefore, about his approach in verses 1-9? What can we learn from these verses about our privileges and prospects as Christians?
2. What were the main causes of the dissensions in the church at Corinth? Reread verses 10-17 (see also 3:3-4 and 3:21)? How can similar dissensions arise in church life today? According to this passage why are they fundamentally wrong and what is the remedy for them?

**MAY 21**

**1 COR 1:18 – 2:16**

**DONE**

1. List Paul's reasons for preaching the word of the cross in the way he did. See verses 1:17-2:5.
2. See verses 2:6 – 3:2. What does Paul teach here about (1) 'human wisdom' and (2) 'a secret hidden wisdom of God'? How is the latter to be possessed and by whom alone is it understood?
3. Looking back over the passage, pick out the work of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and the human preacher respectively in man's salvation. Is the Lord Jesus Christ to you all that Paul speaks of in 1:30-31?

**MAY 22**

**1 COR 3 & 4**

**DONE**

1. 3:1 – 4:2. Discover and summarize all that this section has to teach concerning the place and tasks of Christian workers. What is, or should be, their relationship to (1) God, (2) each other, and (3) those among whom they work?
2. 4:1-21. Why are men's judgments concerning the worth of Christian ministers' work of such little value? How and when will the real worth of man's work for God be made plain? Can the value of what he does affect his own salvation? Or what will it affect? See 3:13-15.

**MAY 23**

**1 COR 5 & 6**

**DONE**

1. Notice in chapter 5 the distinction in the attitudes commanded towards sinning Christians and sinning non-Christians. What special actions are demanded here of the local church, and why are such actions necessary?
2. 6:12-20. These verses stress the permanent significance of the Christian's body. List the points mentioned here. What does it mean to glorify God in your body? What kind of actions are (1) appropriate, and (2) undesirable or even unthinkable?
3. 6:1-11. What reasons does Paul give here for viewing the public washing by Christians of their dirty linen as a denial of the church's mission in the world?

**MAY 24**

**1 COR 7**

**DONE**

In this chapter Paul begins answering specific questions about marriage. These questions had been sent to him by the church at Corinth. His instructions are strict in view of the moral laxity of pagan Corinth. Paul shows that marriage and the single life are equally permissible and that each person must find out in which state God intends them to live.

1. Why did Paul remain single (verses 7-8)? See verses 25-35. Are his reasons relevant for us today?
2. In verses 17-24 Paul is dealing with the wider question of the Christian's position in the society of his day. What rule is laid down for the Christian three times in these verses? How does this apply to us?

3. What is Paul's practical teaching about married life (2-5, 10-16) and compare his more theological treatment of the same matter in Eph 5:22-33.

**MAY 25**

**1 COR 8 & 9**

**DONE**

The church in Corinth had asked about the eating of food which had been offered before an idol. Picture yourself as a Christian in Corinth, invited to a social banquet in a temple, or seated as a guest in the house of a non-Christian friend, and offered food which had been presented in sacrifice to an idol.

1. 8:1-13. Using the knowledge of truth as their sole guide (verses 4-6), what decision did the Corinthians come to about eating food offered to idols? Did Paul agree? List the reasons why he also says that in certain circumstances he would abstain from such eating.
2. 9:1-27. What basic principles which should govern Christian action does Paul illustrate here from his own conduct? In particular what rights does he show Christian workers to have, and what are his reasons for not using them?

**MAY 26**

**1 COR 10:1 – 11:1**

**DONE**

1. 10:1-13. The people of Israel, who came out of Egypt, enjoyed similar privileges to those of Christians. What lessons then can we learn from their failures? Why is the inevitability of temptation no occasion for despair?
2. Paul distinguishes between eating in an idol's temple (verse 14-22), and eating meats bought in the market, which had been offered from an idol (verses 23-30). Why does he condemn the former, but permit the latter, except in the circumstances of verses 28-29? What principles does he lay down, in conclusion, to guide Christians in all such matters?

**MAY 27**

**1 COR 11:2-34**

**DONE**

This chapter deals with two irregularities in public worship. The first concerns the proper way for women to dress when they take part in public worship. The second concerns unchristian behavior at the social meal, which was the occasion of the observance of the Lord's Supper.

1. What were the arguments that Paul brought forward to insist that in Corinth women should be veiled in public worship? How far are there arguments of permanent validity? Can their application vary where prevailing social customs differ from those of Paul's day?
2. What is the central significance of the Lord's Supper (according to verses 23-26)? What were the causes of some receiving unworthily? How can we make our reception more worthy?

**MAY 28**

**1 COR 12**

**DONE**

1. List the different kinds of gift and of service that Paul mentions in this chapter. On what principle are they given, and for what purpose? What responsibility does the possession of such a gift put on

the person who has it?

2. Consider how the character of the human body illustrates both the unity and the diversity of the church. What other lessons does the apostle draw from this illustration?

**MAY 29**

**1 COR 13**

**DONE**

The apostle has urged the believers at Corinth to be zealous to possess the more excellent of the gifts (12:31), but before going on to explain what he means by this (chapter 14), he pauses to point out that spiritual gifts are of profit only when exercised in love.

1. Verses 1-3. Why is love so all-important? In what ways does Paul show further in verses 8-13 that love is greater than all other gifts? How can it find expression in my life? Cf. 1 John 4:7, 12; Gal 5:22-23.

2. In verses 4-7 there are fifteen ways of describing love. Write them in a column and then try to put opposite each a single word summarizing it, and if possible, an incident in Jesus' life illustrating it. Then ask yourself: Is this found in me?

**MAY 30**

**1 COR 14**

**DONE**

1. Try to form a mental picture of the church's worship in Corinth. In what ways did it differ from the church's worship today? Did it include any features, no longer familiar, which it would be good to see restored?

2. What two principles should govern the conduct of public worship and of church gatherings? How did Paul apply these principles in his directions about public worship in Corinth?

3. Many in the church at Corinth seem to have wanted to speak in tongues. What assessment does Paul make of this gift? What was Paul's counsel to those who were eager for manifestations of the Spirit? Which gift do you eagerly desire?