

## 2Corinthians – Week 44

### I. Quiz & Review: 2Cor. 10:12-18

#### A. Paul establishes the proper grounds for boasting:

- i. A true servant of God does not commend himself.
- ii. Nor does he compare himself with another servant of God.
- iii. Such men who do these things lack understanding (are fools).
- iv. Paul boasted in the work he did under God's commission and power.
  1. Paul did not boast in the labors of others (as his critics do) because his conviction was to work in fields where others have not planted (cf. Romans 15:20).
- v. Paul has hope on seeing the Corinthians grow in faith so that he could spread the gospel in lands beyond them.
- vi. If a man boasts, he should boast in the Lord!

#### B. Paul establishes what constitutes valid commendation:

- i. The one who commends himself is not approved by the Lord.
- ii. Those who are commended by the Lord are approved by the Lord!

### II. Continuation – Chapter 11

#### A. Paul had just said in 10:12 that commending oneself and comparing oneself to others is unwise (foolish).

##### i. But Paul is in a dilemma...

1. If he ignores the strongholds his critics have erected against him, the Corinthians might be persuaded to side with the critics.
2. But if he stoops to the level of the critics by boasting about himself, he will be a fool!
3. But if he does not defend himself, he may lose the Corinthians to bigger fools!
4. Forced into a corner, Paul feels he must become "foolish" (cf. 12:11) and introduce his own "boasts" in order to reveal to the Corinthians some of the evidences of the Lord's commendation of his ministry! (cf. 10:18)

##### ii. Now, the difference between Paul and his critics is that...

1. Paul admits that what he does (i.e., boasting) is foolish; his critics do not!
2. Along with his accomplishments, Paul boasts about his humiliating experiences; his critics only boast of their achievements...

#### B. 2Cor. 11:1 (ESV), "*I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me!*"

- i. Paul begins his "foolish speech" but doesn't actually get into his "boasting" until the second part of verse 21.
- ii. From verses 2-6, Paul gives three reasons as to why they should bear with his foolishness...
  1. He passionately wanted to keep them pure before their final stage of marriage to Jesus!
  2. Since they readily accepted the message of false teachers, they should readily accept the message of their gospel father!
  3. He is convinced that he is not in the least inferior to his critics!

- C. 2Cor. 11:2 (ESV), *“For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”*
- i. God had jealously guarded His bride, Israel, from the deceitfulness of deceivers who sought to draw their affections away from Himself (cf. Hosea).
  - ii. Paul felt the same divine or godly concern for the Corinthians.
    1. Paul pictured himself as the father of a virgin bride (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15).
    2. The word “betrothed” means “to promise in marriage.”
    3. Unlike today, marriage was done in two stages: betrothal and consummation.
    4. In ancient Jewish culture:
      - a. The father of the betrothed woman would receive gifts as a safeguard for his daughter’s virginity.
      - b. His responsibility was to present his daughter as a virgin to the groom’s home.
    5. Paul’s desire was to keep his daughter, the Corinthian church, pure until she would be given to Christ in the final stage of marriage.
- D. 2Cor. 11:3 (ESV), *“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”*
- i. Sincere and pure devotion are prerequisites for a continuing relationship to Christ!
    1. “Sincere devotion” denotes simplicity, uncomplicated by other ideas and notions.
    2. “Pure devotion” denotes 100% commitment.
    3. A bride who remains true to Christ, through all the ups and downs of life, in the face of conflicting philosophies and moral principles, is what Christ deserves.
  - ii. Paul’s critics were not just calling his apostolic authority into question. They were leading the Corinthians astray.
    1. Paul expressed the seriousness of this seduction by his critics comparing it with the serpent’s cunning deception of Eve (Gen. 3:1ff).
      - a. Satan seduced Eve by creating doubt in her mind: “Did God actually say...?”
      - b. And because she readily entertained Satan’s cunning, she eventually bit into the forbidden fruit.
      - c. Paul’s critics aimed to create doubts in the minds of his gospel children, who, unfortunately, readily give them their attention. (cf. 11:4).
    2. Paul’s reference to the serpent’s deception serves to remind the Corinthians that Satan is the master of disguise.
      - a. He seems very impressive and appears righteous!
      - b. And so are his servants! (cf. 11:15).
    3. Satan lies coiled up, ready to strike at the first sign of weakness!
      - a. He seeks to replace truth with sugar-coated lies!
  - iii. You see this happening even today as Christians are captivated by charismatic teachers who lead their minds astray from the truth of God’s Word.
    1. Examples of how false teachers, like Satan, lead others astray:
      - a. Did God really say one MUST be baptized to be saved?
      - b. Did God really say a woman must remain silent in the assemblies?
      - c. Did God really teach that a lost soul suffers eternally in hell?
      - d. Did God really say that practicing homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of heaven?
  - iv. If Satan is allowed to captivate a person’s thoughts (mind), he has been given absolute power over that person’s convictions, views, actions, lifestyle, habits, decisions and plans!