

2 Corinthians 11 Paul Defends His Apostleship

I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. 2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. 3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully. 5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not so in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made this evident to you in all things.

7 Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? 8 I robbed other churches by taking wages from them to serve you; 9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

16 Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if you do, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little. 17 What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. 19 For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. 20 For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face. 21 To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison.

But in whatever respect anyone else is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they

descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions

- What questions were provoked within you?
- Did anything confuse you?
- Did anything move you emotionally?
- Did God instruct you to do something?
- Did you gain any insight into God's character

Paul's observations and insights

1. The apostle Paul is constantly having to defend himself - this time they are challenging his apostleship.
2. This church has abandoned respect for Paul and is disregarding his leadership capability.
3. Why do we need leadership in the church?
4. What is an apostle?
5. The apostle Paul is going to take this church on a reality check excursion?
6. What does it mean 'to bear' with someone?
7. Paul makes mention of a concept called 'Godly jealousy'. Are there different types of jealousy and is there a difference between them?
8. Paul's intention for this church is to present her innocent before God, pure and holy.
9. Because Paul makes mention of the garden of Eden and the serpent that enticed Eve,

we can see he had the conviction as to how sin came into the world and destroyed man. Jesus had the same perspective.

10. The simplicity of following Jesus is undermined when inappropriate leaders come and take control.

11. What does it mean to be devoted to Jesus Christ?

12. Paul challenges this church, asking the question - why are they willing to listen to the foolishness of the teachings of another gospel, from other leaders, that takes them into bondage?

13. The apostle Paul's ability to speak so that he was heard, may well have been less than his ability to explain in a letter, all that he knew and understood from the Lord.

14. Is it right to get paid for preaching the gospel?

15. Unless someone pays, who is going to pay to establish God's Kingdom values into the hearts of men?

16. It would seem Paul is being financed by other churches to establish a work amongst this church?

17. The apostle Paul used to make tents to substitute his daily financial needs.

18. Should we have a relationship with a spirit of poverty?

19. Should we connect to the spirit of prosperity? What do you think?

20. Who gets what, when we give our money to God's Kingdom purposes?

21. What is this 'truth of Christ' that Paul makes mention of.

22. What is the point of declaring 'what you are', by stating 'what you are not', - verse 11?

23. Jesus said, 'it would be by the bearing of our fruit people would know what we are'.

24. Why does Satan disguise himself as an Angel of light?

25. We become like the people we hang around? Is this true?

26. Paul is boasting for the purpose of pressing home a point to this church - he wants to make them see.

27. Why as a human being are we more prepared to accept an untruth over a truth?

28. The apostle Paul, at this point, is boiling over - he states, 'I speak as if I am insane'!

29. Look at what Paul is prepared to suffer for the proclamation of the gospel - verse 24.

30. There is a cost to pay for being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

31. Can you imagine the weight of responsibility Paul was carrying, for his love for the churches he had established and the Christians in them?

32. What does it mean to be 'led into sin'?

33. True leadership is sacrificial service, not the need for adoration from others.

34. Humility is the hallmark of a good shepherd.

35. Jesus said, 'in this world you will have great trouble, take heart, for I have overcome the world'.