

2 Corinthians 10

READ

2 Corinthians 11:1-15...

Discuss...

11:7 Free of charge. Greek culture measured the importance of a teacher by the fee he could command. The false apostles therefore accused Paul of being a counterfeit, since he refused to charge for his services (cf. 1 Cor. 9:1-15). They convinced the Corinthians to be offended by Paul's refusal to accept support from them, offering that as evidence that he did not love them (cf. v. 11). Paul's resort to manual labor to support himself (Acts 18:1-3) also embarrassed the Corinthians, who felt such work to be beneath the dignity of an apostle. With biting irony Paul asked his accusers how foregoing his right to support could possibly be a sin. In fact, by refusing support he had humbled himself so they could be exalted; that is, lifted out of their sin and idolatry.

Discuss what do you think of Paul's attitude and that of the Corinthians?

11:8 I robbed other churches. "Robbed" is a very strong word, used in extrabiblical Greek to refer to pillaging. Paul, of course, did not take money from churches without their consent; his point is that the churches who supported him while he ministered in Corinth received no direct benefit from the support they gave him. Why Paul refused to accept the support he was entitled to from the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:15) is not clear; perhaps some of them were suspicious of his motives in promoting the offering for the Jerusalem church (cf. 12:16-18).

Why do you think Paul used such strong language?

Why trust Paul. The Corinthians had grounds to think paying attention to Paul was wise. First, his "godly jealousy," that proved his love (v. 2). Second, the propensity the Corinthians have shown to be led astray and listen to others who preach a different Jesus than Paul preaches (vv. 3-4). Third, the fact that Paul was "not thinking that he was in the least inferior to those "super-apostles" who were weaning the church away from its founding Dad (v. 5).

Discuss why you think these three grounds remain a good test when someone calls on us to change allegiance.

Lower myself (11:7). One strange argument mounted against Paul was apparently that he didn't take money from the Corinthians. Certainly if he were an apostle, he would have a right to support. Since he didn't accept it, he must not be an apostle. Paul responds with irony. What a sin it must have been for Paul to lower himself to pursue manual labor, just so he could eat while he spent himself to lift the Corinthians beyond idolatry!

What can we learn from Paul's attitude here?

Masquerade (11:13-14). Satan came to Eve pretending he wanted to help. He didn't, but if he had been open about his intent to lead the first pair into sin, Eve would have rejected him out of hand. Of course Satan's underlings try to look and sound righteous. What true believer would ever be led astray by them if they were open about their own wicked intent? An apostle would accept prison, beatings, shipwreck, danger, and starvation to minister to others. And as an apostle he would suffer deeply every setback experienced by those he loved in the churches he founded.

What can we learn about Satan and Paul here?

Paul presented two pieces of evidence to prove his love for the Corinthians: his jealousy over the church—protecting them from "spiritual unfaithfulness," and his generosity to the church—refusing to accept support from them. May we be faithful and generous too!

PRAY

Pray for each other out of this chapter. Pray also we (LCC) will continue to help people find and follow Jesus.