

2 Corinthians 11 - A Warning Against Apostasy

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2 Corinthians 11

(2) Paul defends his apostleship (11:1–12:13)

(A) Paul's declaration evidences his apostleship (11:1-15)

(a) Paul's reason for making this claim (11:1-6)

(i) To present the Corinthians to Christ in purity (11:1-2)

1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.

1 I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me.

1 I wish you would tolerate a little of my foolishness. Yes, please tolerate me!

1 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me.

2 For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

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.

2 I am jealous of you with God's own jealousy, because I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to the Messiah.

2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

- Since we are engaged spiritually, we are to put away anything in which we would be "cheating" on Christ

- Don't confuse jealousy with envy. True love is never envious, but it has a right to be jealous over those who are loved. It seeks the best for the one loved.

— A husband rightfully resents and resists any rivalry that threatens their love for each other

— A true patriot has every right to be jealous over his freedom and will fight to protect it

— A parent is jealous over his children and seeks to protect them from anything that will harm them

The model that Paul lays out is that of a loving father with a daughter engaged to be married. His desire is to keep her pure: He sees the Church as a bride (Eph 5:22ff; Rom 7:4; Rev 19:1-9). The idiom "the Body of Christ" for the Church also speaks of the marital intimacy (Gen 2:24). See [Jewish Wedding Ceremony](#) for additional information on Christ's preparation of the Church.

(ii) To protect the Corinthians from falsehood (11:3-4)

3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his trickery, your minds will be led astray from sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

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.

3 However, I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by its tricks, so your minds may somehow be lured away from sincere and pure devotion to the Messiah.

3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in 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, ***this you tolerate very well!***

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.

4 For if someone comes along and preaches another Jesus than the one we preached, or should you receive a different spirit from the one you received or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you are all too willing to listen.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

- "...*this* you tolerate very well" - sarcasm from Paul; this church had strayed from the principles that Paul taught them, and he sarcastically says that they tolerate this false doctrine "very well"

— Similar to how the church at Thyatira "tolerated" Jezebel and her false teaching

(iii) To contend for his superiority over the "super apostles" (11:5)

5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

5 For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.

5 I do not think I'm inferior in any way to those "super-apostles."

5 For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.

(iv) To compensate for his inadequacy in speech (11:6)

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.

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.

6 Even though I may be untrained as an orator, I am not so in the field of knowledge. We have made this clear to all of you in every possible way.

6 But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things.

(b) Paul's policy of ministering without charge does not detract from his apostolic claim (11:7-15)

(i) Paul did not want to be a burden (11:7-8)

7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge?

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?

7 Did I commit a sin when I humbled myself by proclaiming to you the gospel of God free of charge, so that you could be exalted?

7 Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely?

8 I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you;
8 I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you;
8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.
8 I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.
- Irony: Yes, he had been a "robber." He "robbed" other churches so that he would not have had to "rob" them! (Now the Judaizers were actually robbing them!)
- Paul had labored as a tentmaker (Acts 18:1-3) and even received gifts from other churches so that he might evangelize Corinth. It had cost them nothing.

(ii) The Macedonian gift sustained Paul (11:9)

9 and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brothers 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.
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.
9 When I was with you and needed something, I did not bother any of you, because our brothers who came from Macedonia supplied everything I needed. I kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and I will continue to do so.
9 And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.
- Paul's policy was explained in 1 Cor 9. He had given up his financial rights for the Gospel's sake; and for the sake of lost who might stumble over anything that gave the impression of being in a "religious business." No person could accuse him of covetousness or selfishness (Acts 20:33-35).

(iii) Paul's motivation was love (11:10-11)

10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.
10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.
10 As surely as the truth of the Messiah⁴ is in me, my boasting will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia.
10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *that I do!*
11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do!*
11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows that I do!
11 Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth.

(iv) Paul did not want to be criticized for ministering for profit (11:12)

12 But what I am doing I will also *continue to do*, so that I may eliminate the opportunity from those who want an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

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.

12 But I will go on doing what I'm doing in order to deny an opportunity to those people who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in the work they are boasting about.

12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

(v) Paul's opponents had no claim to apostleship (11:13-15)

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.

13 Such people are false apostles, dishonest workers who are masquerading as apostles of the Messiah.

13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

14 And no wonder, since Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into 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.

15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

15 So it is not surprising if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their doom will match their deeds!

15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

(B) Paul's suffering evidences his apostleship (11:16-33)

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.

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.

16 I will say it again: No one should think that I am a fool. But if you do, then treat me like a fool so that I can also boast a little.

16 I say again, let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

17 What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.

17 What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting.

17 When I talk as a confident boaster, I am not talking with the Lord's authority but like a fool.

17 That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.

18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also.

18 Since many people boast in a fleshly way, I will do it, too.

18 Seeing that many glory after the flesh, I will glory also.

- Since "boasting" seems to be the "in thing," Paul plays along. "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." - Prov 26:5

19 For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly.

19 For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly.

19 You are wise, so you will gladly be tolerant of fools.

19 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.

20 For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, if anyone devours you, if anyone takes advantage of you, if anyone exalts himself, if anyone hits you in the face.

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.

20 You tolerate anyone who makes you his slaves, devours what you have, takes what is yours, orders you around, or slaps your face!

20 For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on 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 am speaking in foolishness—I too am bold.

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.

21 I am ashamed to admit it, but we have been too weak for that. Whatever anyone else dares to claim—I am talking like a fool—I can claim it, too.

21 I speak as concerning reproach, as though we had been weak. Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.

22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they among Abraham's descendants? So am I.

22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I.

- Paul speaks satirically. He had surrendered his "credentials" on a road leading to Damascus.

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

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.

23 Are they the Messiah's servants? I am insane to talk like this, but I am a far better one! I have been involved in far greater efforts, far more imprisonments, countless beatings, and have faced death more than once.

23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.

24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*.

24 Five times I received from the Jews 40 lashes minus one.

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

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 *adrift* at sea.

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.

25 Three times I was beaten with a stick, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, and I drifted on the sea for a day and a night.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been 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 at sea, dangers among false brothers;

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;

26 I have traveled extensively and have been endangered from rivers, robbers, my own people, and gentiles. I've also been in danger in the city, in the open country, at sea, from false brothers,

26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils 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.

27 *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, through hunger, thirst, many periods of fasting, coldness, and nakedness.

27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

28 Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

28 Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.

28 Besides everything else, I have a daily burden because of my anxiety about all the churches.

28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

29 Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

29 Who is weak without me being weak, too? Who is caused to stumble without me becoming indignant?

29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?

30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

30 If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.

30 If I must boast, I will boast about the things that show how weak I am.

30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.

31 The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me,

32 In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me,

32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas put guards around the city of Damascus to catch me,

32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and so escaped his hands.

33 but I was let down in a basket through an opening in the wall and escaped from him.
33 And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.