

The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Lesson 10

The Mark of Paul's True Apostleship

2 Corinthians 10-12 is a new section dealing with a serious issue in the church—false teachers. The first section of 2 Corinthians 1-7 focused on restoring Paul's relationship with the church in Corinth and explaining why he had been delayed in coming to Corinth. Chapters 8-9 were a reminder of their commitment to participate in the offering for the Jerusalem church. In this final section, his tone changes to confrontational and sarcastic. False apostles had arisen within the church assaulting Paul's ministry, character, and credentials as an Apostle of Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 10-12

1. In his struggle to preach the true Gospel, what kind of warfare was Paul involved in according to 2 Cor.10:3-6? Notice all the military terms he piles up here.
2. What were the false teachers saying about Paul in 2 Cor.10:10; 11:6? How are the false teachers "without understanding" according to verses 12 and 18?
3. Normally, Paul is humble and never boasts about himself, but in his defense of his Apostleship he must indulge in a "little foolishness" (11:1). Why is it so important to Paul to defend his ministry (2 Cor.11:2-6)?
4. The false teachers boasted about how much money they received for speeches and criticized Paul for getting nothing. What was Paul's response to that criticism in 2 Cor.11:7-9?
5. Would the false teachers be able to stop Paul (2 Cor.11:10-12)? In reality who were the false teachers (2 Cor.11:13-15)? Why did not some of the church members recognize them for what they really were?
6. In 2 Cor.11:16-21, Paul indulges in sarcasm and cynicism toward those in the church who listen to the false teachers. What did Paul regard as the true mark of a real Apostle for Christ (2 Cor.11:23-30)?
7. Apparently, the false teachers boasted about having visions (12:1). What happened to Paul fourteen years earlier (2 Cor. 12:2-4)?
8. Naturally, after seeing "Paradise" and hearing amazing things in heaven, Paul was prone to exalting himself. Therefore, to keep Paul humble, what did God give him (2 Cor.12:7)?

9. This was apparently a source of great physical pain for Paul, so what did Paul do (2 Cor.12:8)? What message did Paul get back from the Lord (12:9)?

10. Based on Paul's view of the necessary suffering and humility of a true Apostle of Christ, how would you respond to the televangelists who espouse the good health and wealth gospel so popular today?