

**LESSON ELEVEN**  
**2 CORINTHIANS 11: 1 - 33**

(It is important to remember that, beginning in chapter 10, Paul is addressing the false teachers and those who follow these enemies of Christ and Paul. The majority of the Corinthians accepted Paul and trust him. They have repented of their sins, and they now long to see Paul again to prove their love. There remained a minority however that still challenged Paul's authority. It is this group that Paul addresses). The Corinthians are in danger of being turned away from Christ by having their confidence in Paul undermined by the misrepresentations of his enemies. It is therefore necessary for him boast of himself, and all that he has been through, to re-establish his claim that he had authority over them, and to show his superiority over these "false-apostles". Yet Paul finds this is very hard thing for him to do. He will humbly apologize for his boasting and ask that they "bear with him" while he does so (v 1). He wants them to know that his boasting is done out of the purest of motives; love for them and anxiety for their welfare. He is afraid that they will be "unfaithful" to Christ their husband, and his desire is that they will remain pure for Him (vs. 2). His anxiety is justified by the readiness of the Corinthians to put up with and listen to these false teachers. He will now boast to show that he is not at all behind these "super-apostles" who had deceived them (vs. 5). They may be more gifted speakers, but in knowledge and in everything that really pertained to the apostolic office, he was far superior to them (vs. 6). His refusal to be supported by them while he worked among them should not have been an offense to them, and of all things this ought to prove his sincerity, not disprove his Apostleship (vs. 7-9). He refused to accept any support from the Corinthians, not because he did not love them, but because he wanted to cut off all opportunity to question his sincerity. And he challenged his enemies to live as he did, which he knew they would not do (vs. 10-12). These false teachers claimed to be apostles, even though they had no more right to this office than Satan had to be regarded as and "angel of light" (vs. 13 - 15).

Beginning in verse 16, Paul will now boast - not like you and I might boast of our accomplishments, our skills, our expertise, but in his weaknesses. He seems to be saying "Since boasting among you seems to be the 'in thing to do', allow me to boast a little." But Paul boasts in all the suffering and afflictions that he has endured for their sakes and for the sake of the gospel. His language is very strong and, at times, sarcastic, as he attacks the so-called qualifications of these "super-apostles". Paul argues the proof of his Apostleship from the standpoint of pedigree (vs 22), persecution (vs. 23-25a), peril (vs. 25b - 27), and pressure (vs. 28-33). In short, the branded body of Paul was proof of his Apostleship. His critics had not one scar on their bodies. In all things however, Paul makes it clear that it was not his skill, talent, strength, or courage that saw him through all these afflictions. Christ deserves the glory! And the Corinthians ought to know that only a man under the direction from God and controlled by His providence could have endured what he has gone through.

**KEY PHRASES:**

1. "Bear with me" (vs. 1) - It is necessary that Paul tell the truth about his work to defend himself against his enemies.
2. "Betrothed" (vs. 2) - Actually part of the marriage itself, and just as binding.
3. "Jealous" (vs. 2) - Zealous.
4. "Simplicity" (vs. 3) - Singleness, Single-Hearted Devotion.
5. "Chiefest Apostles" (vs. 5) - These false apostles that invaded Corinth.

6. “Robbed other churches” (vs. 8) - Paul did not take support from Corinth, he accepted money from other churches to support him while at Corinth.
7. “Transforming themselves” (vs 13) - Disguise, masquerade.
8. “Not after the Lord” (vs 17) - These words are still inspired, but as he boasts he is being unlike the Lord. In normal circumstances self praise in not becoming a Christian, but these circumstances are not normal.

**APPLICATION:**

1. What is your level of devotion and commitment to God? Be prepared to discuss what God requires of us in the area of commitment.
2. The example of the Bereans (Acts 17:11) should ever be part of our lives so that we can avoid what happened to the Corinthians. They failed to test these “ministers of righteousness”.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did Paul “Boast”?
2. What role did Paul play in the “betrothal”?
3. Explain the difference between “betrothal” and “marriage” and when do these things occur for the Christian?
4. Explain Paul’s illustration of “Eve” in verse 3.
5. How does Satan trick us today?
6. Who are the “Chiefest apostles” in verse 5?
7. Was Paul not a good speaker (vs. 6)?
8. Explain why Paul describes his escape from Damascus? How does this fit in the context?