

SERIES: II CORINTHIANS: THE HEART AND HUMILITY OF A MAN OF GOD, WEEK 41

TITLE: PAUL ANSWERS HIS CRITICS

TEXT: II CORINTHIANS 10:7-11

INTRODUCTION: (1) IMAGINE WITH ME IF YOU WOULD, THE CRITICISMS THE APOSTLE PAUL WOULD RECEIVE IF HE WERE LIVING IN OUR DAY.

* CRITICISMS LIKE: PAUL, YOU ARE NOT RELEVANT.

** PAUL, YOU ARE HARSH.

*** PAUL, YOU ARE NOT THAT INTERESTING OF A PUBLIC SPEAKER, YOU PUT PEOPLE TO SLEEP, **YOUR PREACHING IS BORING, YOU DON'T TELL ENOUGH STORIES.**

**** PAUL, YOU ARE TOO NARROW AND NOT PROGRESSIVE.

(2) PAUL, YOU ARE OUT OF TOUCH.

* PAUL, YOU ARE NOT POLITICALLY CORRECT.

** PAUL, YOU LACK PRESENCE IN THE PULPIT **AND YOU DO NOT LOOK LIKE A PASTOR, YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT AS A TV PREACHER, YOU DON'T HAVE THE LOOK OR THE VOICE.**

*** PAUL, YOU ARE TOO MEEK.

**** PAUL, YOU ARE TOO DOGMATIC, YOU LACK LOVE, AND NEED TO BEND, YOUR PREACHING IS TOO AUTHORITATIVE.

(3) PAUL YOU NEED TO ADAPT AND BECOME MORE SEEKER FRIENDLY.

* AND PAUL, YOU ARE TOO NEGATIVE AND NOT FUNNY, LIGHTEN UP.

** NOW MY POINT IS, PAUL WOULD NOT BE A REAL POPULAR PREACHER IN OUR DAY AND WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE MINISTERING IN A REAL LARGE CHURCH. HE WOULD NOT HAVE A **LOT OF NOTORIETY AND I'M SURE THAT HE** WOULD NOT HAVE A BOOK ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLER LIST.

*** PAUL IN OUR DAY WOULD BE GREATLY MISUNDERSTOOD AND NOT CONSIDERED THAT SUCCESSFUL.

**** AND I SAY THAT, FOR PAUL EVEN IN HIS OWN DAY, TOOK A LOT OF CRITICISM AND WAS NOT VIEWED AS A POWERFUL COMMUNICATOR ACCORDING TO THE STANDARDS OF GREEK RHETORIC, OR AS A GREAT PUBLIC SPEAKER.

(4) PAUL WOULD NOT BE VIEWED, THANKFULLY, AS A JOEL OSTEEN, A ROBERT SCHULER, A RICK WARREN OR A T. D. JAKES.

* PAUL WAS NOT TRYING TO BE POPULAR, HE WAS A MAN WHO PLEASED AND LOVED HIS LORD, NONETHELESS HE WAS CRITICIZED EXCESSIVELY, RELENTLESSLY.

** AND A TRUE MAN OF GOD LIKE PAUL WILL RECEIVE CRITICISM AND SOME OF IT JUSTLY, BUT HOW HE RESPONDS TO IT IS VERY IMPORTANT. (AND THIS CERTAINLY APPLIES TO ALL OF US.)

*** DO WE REACT AND BECOME DEFENSIVE WHEN WE RECEIVE CRITICISM? DO WE RECEIVE IT AND ALLOW THE LORD TO REVEAL BLIND SPOTS? DO WE BECOME UNRIGHTEOUSLY ANGRY? DO WE LISTEN AT ALL? DO WE IN PRIDE REACT RATHER THAN RESPOND? ARE WE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR OWN IMAGE OR **GOD'S GLORY? DO WE PRACTICE** DISCERNMENT AND KNOW WHEN THE CRITICISM IS UNJUST AND DEFEND THE LORD AND NOT OURSELVES? **ARE WE MORE CONCERNED FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH AND GOD'S WORK THAN WE ARE OVER OUR EGOS?**

**** WELL, THE ANSWERS TO THOSE QUESTIONS ARE TELLING, THEY ARE REVEALING. AND AT LEAST FOR ME TOO MANY TIMES HAVE REVEALED PRIDE AND BEING SELF ORIENTED, **BEING MORE CONCERNED FOR SELF OVER GOD'S GLORY.**

(5) WELL, PAUL IN OUR TEXT TODAY AND THROUGHOUT THE REST OF II CORINTHIANS WILL RESPOND TO UNJUST CRITICISM BY A MINORITY OF FALSE TEACHERS AT CORINTH IN HIS DAY WHOSE PURPOSE WAS TO PUT DOWN PAUL AND HIS AUTHORITY, TO LIFT UP SELF AND HAVE MORE AUTHORITY IN INFLUENCING THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

* BUT PAUL ANSWERS THOSE CRITICISMS, NOT SO MUCH TO DEFEND SELF, BUT TO DEFEND HIS LORD AND PROTECT HIS CHURCH.

** PAUL HAS TO RESPOND TO HIS CRITICS TO PROTECT THE CHURCH AND NOT ALLOW THE FALSE TEACHERS TO HAVE MORE INFLUENCE IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH.

***** PAUL'S RESPONSE WAS NOT ALL ABOUT SELF, BUT ALL ABOUT TRUTH AND GOD'S GLORY AND PROTECTING THE SHEEP.**

****** AND THAT WAS PAUL'S MOTIVE IN RESPONDING TO HIS CRITICS, GOD'S GLORY, GOD'S TRUTH AND CHRIST'S CHURCH. THAT WAS HIS PURPOSE IN ANSWERING HIS CRITICS.**

(6) THUS I'VE TITLED OUR MESSAGE TODAY, "PAUL ANSWERS HIS CRITICS."

*** AND UNDER THAT TITLE AND THEME WE'LL LOOK AT 4 MAIN POINTS. NO. 1 THE COMMAND OF PAUL TO LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE AND WHAT WAS OBVIOUS ABOUT HIS MINISTRY AND THE FALSE TEACHER'S MINISTRY, V. 7; NO. 2 THE CONFIDENCE PAUL HAD IN HIS GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY, V. 8; NO. 3 THE CRITICISMS THAT PAUL WAS ACTUALLY RECEIVING, VV. 9&10; AND NO. 4 THE CONSIDERATION THAT PAUL ASKS FOR WHEN IT CAME TO HIS INTEGRITY, V. 11.**

*** SO WE'LL LOOK AT THE COMMAND, THE CONFIDENCE, THE CRITICISMS AND THE CONSIDERATION UNDER THE THEME OF PAUL ANSWERS HIS CRITICS.**

**** AND WITH THOSE MARKERS BEFORE US, LOOK AT V. 7 PLEASE, WHERE WE'LL SEE OUR FIRST POINT, THE COMMAND.**

I. THE COMMAND, (READ V. 7)

A. NOW SOME QUICK BACKGROUND REMINDERS SINCE WE HAVE BEEN OUT OF II CORINTHIANS FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS.

* IN CHAPTERS 1-9, PAUL Poured OUT HIS HEART TO THE REPENTANT MAJORITY OF CHRISTIANS AT THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH WHOM RESPONDED TO HIS SEVERE LETTER TO REPENT AND WAS PLEADING FOR THEIR CONTINUED TRUST AND LOYALTY.

** THEN, BEGINNING IN CHAPTER 10 AND GOING TO THE END OF THIS LETTER IN CHAPTER 13, PAUL TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE FALSE TEACHERS, MINORITY, WHOM HAD INFILTRATED THE CHURCH AT CORINTH AND DIRECTLY REFUTES THEIR ATTACKS ON HIM.

*** THUS THE LAST 4 CHAPTERS OF II CORINTHIANS FORM A POWERFUL DEFENSE **OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY AND APOSTLESHIP, THAT HE WAS LEGITIMATE.** AND SPECIFICALLY OUR VERSES FOR TODAY, AND LORD WILLING NEXT **SUNDAY ARE A VITAL CORE OF PAUL'S DEFENSE.**

**** NOW WITH THAT BACKGROUND BEFORE US, BEGINNING HERE IN V. 7, PAUL STARTS TO EXHORT THE CORINTHIANS TO MAKE A SOUND JUDGMENT BASED ON CLEAR COMPELLING EVIDENCE AND FACTS.

1. AND THE OPENING STATEMENT IN V. 7, ACCORDING TO MOST (NOT ALL BUT MOST) FAITHFUL BIBLE SCHOLARS IS A COMMAND, AND SHOULD READ AS THE ESV AND THE NLT TRANSLATE IT, **"LOOK AT WHAT IS BEFORE YOUR EYES."**

* CORINTHIANS, LOOK AT THE PLAIN FACTS!
LOOK AT THE OBVIOUS FACTS!

** THE POINT BEING, THE GREEK VERB HERE "YOU ARE LOOKING" IS NOT AN INDICATIVE VERB, **"YOU ARE LOOKING," OR AN INTERROGATIVE VERB, "ARE YOU LOOKING?" BUT AS AN IMPERATIVE VERB "LOOK! LOOK AT THE FACTS!"**

*** AND WHEN PAUL USES THIS VERB IN THIS FORM IT IS A COMMAND IN EVERY OTHER USE, WITH ONE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION AND CONTEXTUALLY IN THE FLOW OF THE CONTEXT, THIS VERB MUST BE A COMMAND.

**** THUS, IN THE BEGINNING OF V.7, PAUL IS CHALLENGING THE CORINTHIANS TO LOOK AT WHAT WAS OBVIOUS, TO CONSIDER THE FACTS AND EVIDENCE THAT WAS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM.

2. AND IF THEY DID, THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSION WAS THAT PAUL WAS A TRUE APOSTLE AND HIS ENEMIES WERE THE DECEIVERS.

* FOR YOU SEE THE BEST WAY TO AVOID BEING TAKEN BY A FAKE OR A COUNTERFEIT IS TO STUDY, TO OBSERVE WHAT IS GENUINE, TO KNOW THE TRUTH.

** AND FOR YEARS WE WERE TOLD FOR THOSE WHO WERE ABLE TO SPOT COUNTERFEIT MONEY WAS THEY STUDIED REAL MONEY AND KNEW **IT'S DETAILS SO WELL, THEY COULD SPOT A COUNTERFEIT, A FAKE BILL EASILY.** (NOW THEY HAVE CHANGED THE PAPER AND CAN TELL BY USING A CERTAIN KIND OF PEN AND MARKING IT.)

*** WELL, IN ESSENCE, PAUL WAS SAYING, CORINTHIANS YOU KNOW MY LIFE, MY PREACHING, MY AUTHORITY AS AN APOSTLE, YOU KNOW ME, LOOK AT THE PLAIN FACTS AND YOU WILL KNOW, I AM NOT THE FAKE BY THE FRUITS OF MY LIFE.

**** **LOOK AT THE OBVIOUS FACTS, I DON'T LOVE MONEY, THEY DO, I HAVE LIVED ABOVE REPROACH AND IN PURITY, AND THE FALSE APOSTLES HAVEN'T. LOOK AT WHAT IS BEFORE YOUR EYES, LOOK AT THE OBVIOUS FACTS.**

3. NONETHELESS, THE FALSE APOSTLES CLAIM **THAT THEY ARE CHRIST'S, BUT SHOW NO LOVE FOR CHRIST, NO OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST, NO SACRIFICE FOR CHRIST, AND THUS IS A GREAT REVEALER THAT THEY DON'T KNOW CHRIST.**

* **LOOK AT THE REST OF V. 7 PLEASE. "IF ANYONE IS CONFIDENT IN HIMSELF, THAT HE IS CHRIST'S LET HIM CONSIDER THIS AGAIN WITH HIMSELF, THAT JUST AS HE IS CHRIST'S SO ALSO ARE WE!"**

** NOW NOTE THAT PAUL MAY BE SPEAKING ABOUT THE RINGLEADER, THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE FALSE TEACHERS AT THIS POINT, THE ONE WHOM MAY HAVE ATTACKED PAUL THE MOST, **FOR PAUL USES THE SINGULAR "ANYONE," "HIMSELF" TWICE AND "HE" TWICE IN V. 7.**

***** AND BY CLAIMING TO BE CHRIST'S THIS** SPOKESPERSON FOR THE FALSE APOSTLES WAS WITHOUT OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE TO BACK THEM UP. THEY HAD NO TRACK RECORD OF FRUIT LIKE SINNERS BEING CONVERTED, PLANTING CHURCHES AND EQUIPPING THE SAINTS.

**** IT IS TO SAY, WHEN YOU LOOK AT THEIR TRACK RECORD THERE WAS NOTHING BUT AN EMPTY BOAST. TALK BUT NO FRUIT.

4. BUT ALSO BY PROFESSING – CLAIMING TO BE **CHRIST'S, THIS FALSE TEACHER AND THE** OTHERS HE WAS SPEAKING FOR WERE MOST LIKELY CLAIMING MORE THAN THEY WERE JUST CHRISTIANS, THAT THEY CLAIMED TO HAVE A GREATER RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST, A HIGHER, TRANSCENDENT KNOWLEDGE THAN PAUL AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

* AND WHILE CLAIMING HIGHER KNOWLEDGE AND RELATIONSHIP FOR THEMSELVES, A UNIQUE DEVOTION TO CHRIST, THEY WERE CLAIMING THAT THEY WERE THE TRUE MESSENGERS OF GOD, THE TRUE APOSTLES, THE **TRUE TEACHERS, THEY WERE DENYING PAUL'S** AUTHENTICITY.

** AND THEIR LIES WERE DESIGNED TO DISCREDIT PAUL SO THEY COULD REPLACE HIM AS THE AUTHORITATIVE TEACHERS AT CORINTH.

*** BUT AT THE END OF V. 7, PAUL CHALLENGES THE ONE WHOM WOULD REJECT HIS APOSTLESHIP THAT **"WE ARE CHRIST'S" ALSO. WE MEANING TIMOTHY AND TITUS AND PAUL'S ASSOCIATES.** AND ALSO, PAUL WAS NOT **SAYING THAT THEY WERE CHRIST'S FOR HE WILL DEAL WITH THAT IN CHAPTER 11 AND COMMUNICATE THAT THEY ARE NOT IN II CORINTHIANS 11:13-15 (QUOTE THEM).**

**** **AND PAUL'S POINT IS WHETHER ONE TRULY IS THE LORD'S IS NOT BASED ON SUBJECTIVE, NON MEASURABLE EVIDENCE, BUT ON OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE, FRUIT, ACTIONS, TANGIBLE THINGS.**

5. WHICH TAKES US BACK TO THE BEGINNING COMMAND OF V. 7, "CORINTHIANS LOOK AT OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE," LOOK AT WHAT IS BEFORE YOUR EYES, LOOK AT THE PLAIN FACTS, LOOK AT THE OBVIOUS!

*** IT'S NOT WHAT THEY SAY, IT'S NOT WHAT THEY PROFESS, IT IS ACTIONS AND FRUITS, NOT ELOQUENT SPEECH THAT COMMUNICATES WHETHER A PERSON IS CHRIST'S OR NOT.**

**** AND THAT COMMAND LEADS US TO OUR 2'D POINT TODAY, THE CONFIDENCE PAUL HAD IN HIS GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY AS AN APOSTLE. LOOK AT V. 8 PLEASE.**

II. THE CONFIDENCE, (READ V. 8)

A. NOW PAUL WAS NOT A GUY WHO BOASTED ABOUT HIS LIFE AND HIS AUTHORITY HE HAD IN THE LORD.

* HOWEVER, THE IDEA HERE IS, THE FALSE TEACHERS DID, THEY WERE BOASTERS, BRAGGARTS, AND PAUL WILL POINT OUT TOWARDS THE END OF THIS CHAPTER IN V. 17, BUT HE WHO BOASTS, HE WHO GLORIES IN SOMETHING IS TO BOAST OR GLORY IN THE LORD.

** AND THEN PAUL SAID IN GALATIANS 6:14 (QUOTE IT). SAME GREEK WORD IN V. 8 AND V. 17 OF II CORINTHIANS 7. ALSO QUOTE I CORINTHIANS 15:10.

*** NOW PAUL WAS NOT ONE WHO BRAGGED, ALTHOUGH THE FALSE TEACHERS MOST LIKELY ACCUSED AND CRITICIZED HIM OF THAT, BUT IN REALITY THEY WERE THE BOASTERS.

**** SO PAUL SAYS AT THE BEGINNING OF V. 8, FOR EVEN IF I BOAST AS THE FALSE TEACHERS SAY I DO ABOUT MY AUTHORITY, WHEN REALLY THEY ARE THE PROUD BOASTERS.

1. EVEN IF I BOAST ABOUT MY AUTHORITY, I **DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO BE ASHAMED ABOUT**, FOR WHEN I TALK ABOUT MY AUTHORITY, I AM TALKING ABOUT AUTHORITY THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME, THE LORD GAVE IT TO ME, TO US, HIS CO-LABORERS AND WHAT REASON DID PAUL AND HIS ASSOCIATES GIVE FOR THIS AUTHORITY?

* GO BACK TO V. 8, FOR BUILDING YOU UP, FOR YOUR EDIFICATION CORINTHIANS, FOR EQUIPPING AND ESTABLISHING YOU WITH BIBLICAL TEACHINGS, AND FOR NOT DESTROYING YOUR FAITH AS THE FALSE APOSTLES DO.

** AND PAUL WOULD NOT BE PUT TO SHAME ABOUT HIS GOD-GIVEN AUTHORITY THAT THE FALSE TEACHERS WERE CLAIMING HE WAS BOASTING ABOUT.

*** FOR PAUL WOULD NEVER GO TOO FAR AND MAKE EMPTY BOASTS, LIKE THE FALSE TEACHERS, BECAUSE THE LORD GAVE HIM HIS AUTHORITY.

**** PAUL WAS CONFIDENT THAT HIS AUTHORITY WAS GOD GIVEN, THAT HIS POWER **WAS BY GOD'S GRACE AND** THAT AUTHORITY WILL NOT LEAD HIM TO PUBLIC DISGRACE, AS IT DID THE FALSE TEACHERS, WHO HAD NO **AUTHORITY. PAUL WAS CONFIDENT OF GOD'S WORKING THROUGH HIM FOR GOD'S GLORY AND** PAUL COULD BOAST IN THE LORD ABOUT THAT.

2. SO PAUL HAD CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD AND PAUL WILL SPECIFICALLY START TO TALK ABOUT SOME CRITICISMS ABOUT HIMSELF FROM THE FALSE TEACHERS IN VV. 9&10. LOOK AT V. 9 PLEASE TO BEGIN WITH AS WE START TO LOOK AT OUR THIRD POINT TODAY, THE CRITICISMS.

III. THE CRITICISMS, (READ V. 9)

A. NOW CRITICISM NO. 1 WAS, PAUL TERRIFIED THE CORINTHIANS BY HIS LETTERS. AND PROBABLY THE FOCAL POINT OF THIS CRITICISM BY THE FALSE TEACHERS WAS A REFERENCE TO **PAUL'S SEVERE LETTER THAT HE WROTE TO BRING THE CORINTHIANS TO REPENTANCE,** WHICH IT DID.

* BUT THE FALSE APOSTLES TAKE WAS, PAUL IS AN AUTHORITARIAN, ABUSIVE LEADER WHO TRIED TO INTIMIDATE THE CORINTHIANS INTO SUBMISSION THROUGH HIS LETTERS TO THEM.

** SO THE CRITICISM WAS PAUL IS HARSH, UNLOVING, AND USES HIS WRITINGS TO CLUB PEOPLE INTO SUBMISSION.

*** HOWEVER, PAUL WAS NOT TRYING TO TERRIFY THE CORINTHIANS INTO OBEYING HIM, FOR HIS GOAL WAS TO BRING THEM TO REPENTANCE, SO THAT THEY WOULD EXPERIENCE ALL THE BLESSINGS THAT GOD WOULD BESTOW ON THEM RATHER THAN CHASTISEMENT FOR THEIR DISOBEDIENCE.

**** PAUL SPOKE THE TRUTH IN LOVE, NOT TRYING TO HURT THE CORINTHIANS, BUT TO HELP THEM, JUST AS LOVING PARENTS CORRECT WRONG BEHAVIOR IN THEIR CHILDREN AND DISCIPLINE THEM.

1. AND AS PAUL ASKED OF THE CORINTHIANS IN I CORINTHIANS **4:21**, **"WHAT DO YOU DESIRE? SHALL I COME TO YOU WITH A ROD, OR WITH LOVE AND A SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS?"**

* AND AS A LOVING FATHER, NO DOUBT PAUL PREFERRED LOVE AND GENTLENESS OVER THE ROD OF DISCIPLINE.

** PAUL WAS NOT TRYING TO TERRIFY THE CORINTHIANS, BUT TO LOVINGLY CORRECT WITH HONESTY, BOLDNESS AND TRUTH.

*** SO THE FIRST CRITICISM WAS PAUL WAS UNLOVING, UNKIND, HARSH MANIFEST BY HIS TERRIFYING LETTERS TRYING TO BEAT PEOPLE INTO SUBMISSION.

**** BUT MORE CRITICISM FOLLOWS. LOOK AT V. 10 PLEASE.

B. READ V. 10. NOW THE PLURAL PRONOUN **"THEY" IS MAKING REFERENCE TO THE FALSE TEACHERS. AND HERE'S WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT PAUL IN THEIR CRITICISM, THIS IS NOT A COMPLIMENT.**

*** "THEY SAY" HIS LETTERS ARE INTIMIDATING,** THEY ARE THREATENING, UNGRACIOUS, UNKIND, UNLOVING AND FRIGHTENING.

**** "THEY SAY" PAUL WAS A HEAVY WEIGHT** WHEN HE WAS NOT IN PERSON, USING HIS PEN, PAUL WAS BOLD WHEN NOT FACE TO FACE.

***** HOWEVER, PAUL WAS A LIGHTWEIGHT IN PERSON AND IN THE WAY HE SPOKE TO PEOPLE IN PERSON.**

****** THEY WERE SAYING, HIS PERSONAL PRESENCE IS UNIMPRESSIVE, LIT. WEAK, FEEBLE, IMPOTENT, PAUL WAS A LIGHT WEIGHT.**

1. AND IT APPEARS WHEN THE FALSE TEACHERS ARE TALKING ABOUT HIS PERSONAL PRESENCE, THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT HIS PERSONA, HIS AURA, HIS Demeanor, NOT HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE.

* THEY WERE SAYING PAUL LACKED CHARISMA, CHARM, AND DID NOT HAVE A POWERFUL PRESENCE OR PERSONALITY. HE WAS KIND OF A SORRY TYPE OF GUY, NOT HAVING A POWERFUL PRESENCE AND PERSONALITY.

** AND MOST LIKELY THEY MISINTERPRETED HIS MEEKNESS AND HUMILITY WHICH WAS NOT LOOKED UP TO IN GREEK CULTURE, THAT HIS MEEKNESS WAS WEAKNESS, BEING TIMID, NOT A STRONG MAN.

*** FURTHER THEY SAID, AND THIS WAS A LOW **BLOW, "HIS SPEECH IS CONTEMPTIBLE."**

**** LIT. HIS SPEAKING AMOUNTS TO NOTHING, HIS SPEAKING IS WORTHLESS, HIS SPEECH IS OF NO ACCOUNT.

2. AND WHAT THEY MEANT BY THAT WAS THAT PAUL WAS NOT A VERY GOOD PUBLIC SPEAKER, HE LACKED THE POLISHED ORATORICAL AND RHETORICAL SKILLS THAT WERE COVETED AFTER IN GREEK CULTURE.

* THEY WERE SAYING PAUL WAS NOT POLISHED **IN HIS SPEAKING ABILITIES, HE DIDN'T HAVE A** LOT OF STYLE, HE WAS A SECOND RATE SPEAKER.

** WHEREAS THE FALSE TEACHERS USED THEIR SLICK PRESENTATIONS, THEIR POLISHED GREEK ORATORY AND THEIR MANIPULATIVE SKILLS TO SEDUCE AND SWAY THEIR VICTIMS FOR THEIR OWN PERSONAL GAIN, QUOTE EPHESIANS 4:14 AND ROMANS 16:17&18.

*** NOW GOING BACK TO PAUL, THIS CRITICISM PROBABLY HAD CULTURAL MERIT, IN OTHER WORDS PAUL DID NOT WORK ON STYLE, HIS MESSAGE WAS NOT A SLICK PRESENTATION, HIS MESSAGE HAD SUBSTANCE. IT WAS TEXT AND TRUTH DRIVEN.

**** HIS MESSAGE WAS NOT PERSONALITY DRIVEN, BUT POWER OF THE SPIRIT DRIVEN. PAUL DID NOT FOLLOW THEIR ACCEPTED NORMS FOR WHAT A PUBLIC SPEAKER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.

3. AND HE DID THAT ON PURPOSE. FOR HERE IS WHAT HE SAID IN I CORINTHIANS 2:1-5 (QUOTE THEM). ALSO QUOTE II TIMOTHY 4:2-4.

* NOW WITH THOSE TEXTS BEFORE US, **PAUL'S** CONCERN IN SPEAKING WAS NOT THE PROTOCOL OF GREEK ORATORY AND HOW A PUBLIC SPEAKER WAS TO USE HIS OWN SKILL AND WISDOM TO CONVINCe, PAUL WAS CONCERNED THAT HE PREACHED THE WORD THAT THE SPIRIT WOULD CONVICT.

** SO IN ESSENCE, THEIR CRITICISM WAS PROBABLY TAKEN AS A COMPLIMENT BY PAUL. **HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE LIKE THE POPULAR** PREACHERS, BUT A POWERFUL WORD DRIVEN SPIRIT LED PROCLAIMER OF THE WORD OF GOD.

*** WHICH LEADS US TO OUR LAST POINT TODAY, THE CONSIDERATION, SOMETHING PAUL WANTS THE FALSE TEACHERS AND THE CORINTHIANS TO CONSIDER. LOOK AT V. 11 PLEASE.

IV. THE CONSIDERATION, (READ V. 11)

A. NOW HERE IN V. 11, PAUL GOES BACK TO THE RING LEADER, THE SPOKESPERSON OF THE FALSE TEACHERS, WHOM MOST LIKELY HAD COMMUNICATED THESE CRITICISMS PUBLICLY TO THE CORINTHIANS.

* AND PAUL WANTS THIS MAN TO CONSIDER **SOMETHING. AND THAT IS PAUL'S LIFE WAS** TOTALLY CONSISTENT; HE WAS THE SAME PERSON IN DEED WHEN PRESENT AS HE WAS IN THE LETTERS HE WROTE WHEN ABSENT.

** PAUL WAS A MAN OF INTEGRITY, HE WAS NO HYPOCRITE, HIS CHARACTER WAS UNIMPEACHABLE.

*** PAUL WAS NOT INCONSISTENT. BOLD AS A LION WHEN AWAY, AND A MEEK LAMB WHEN PRESENT.

**** THERE WAS NO DISJUNCTION, NO **DISCONNECT BETWEEN PAUL'S WORDS AND DEEDS.** PAUL WAS NOT A COWARD.

1. THERE WAS NO DISCREPANCY WHATEVER BETWEEN HIS WORD AND DEEDS. PAUL WAS NOT A WIMP IN PERSON, BUT BOLD WHEN AWAY. HE WAS NOT ALL BARK WHEN AWAY, BUT NO BITE WHEN PRESENT.

* AND WE GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING OF V. 7, CONSIDER THE FACTS. LOOK AT MY TRACK RECORD. CONSIDER THIS, COUNT THIS, COMPUTE THIS. LOOK AT WHAT IS BEFORE YOUR EYES, A CONSIDERATION FOR THE LEADER OF THE FALSE TEACHERS AND FOR THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH.

IN WRAP UP AND APPLICATION: (1) **CRITICISM HURTS AT TIMES, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S NOT TRUE.**

* BUT IT CAN HELP, WHEN IT IS TRUE, OR PARTIALLY TRUE, WHEN WE GROW FROM IT, WHEN WE LEARN FROM IT, WHEN BLIND SPOTS ARE REVEALED.

** AND FOR PAUL, THE CRITICISM WAS NOT TRUE, BUT IT GAVE HIM AN OPPORTUNITY TO REINFORCE THE TRUTH AND CHALLENGE PEOPLE TO LOOK AT THE OBJECTIVE EVIDENCE, THE FACTS, NOT SUBJECTIVE OPINION.

*** AND FOR PAUL, IT WAS NOT POOR ME, FOR **HE WAS MORE CONCERNED FOR THE LORD'S GLORY, THE LORD'S TRUTH, THE SOULS OF MEN AND WOMEN OVER HIS OWN PRESTIGE, PRIDE AND REPUTATION.**

**** PAUL BASICALLY WAS OVER HIMSELF, NOT IMPRESSED WITH SELF AND REPUTATION. HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE GLORY OF GOD AND HIS REPUTATION.

(2) AND BELOVED, WHEN WE GET TO THE PLACE THAT WE ARE THROUGH WITH OURSELVES AND ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OTHERS AND **THE LORD'S GLORY, OVER** HOW THIS AFFECTS ME AND MY FEELINGS, WHAT A GREAT VICTORY.

* I MEAN THIS IS LIFE-CHANGING. IT IS THE ESSENCE OF AN UPWARD OUTWARD FOCUS, NOT A SELF FOCUS, NOT HOW DOES IT AFFECT ME?

** IT IS COMING TO THE PLACE OF BEING A SERVANT RATHER THAN WANTING TO BE SERVED. IT IS BECOMING LIKE CHRIST.

*** AND BROTHERS AND SISTERS, IT COMES **DOWN TO VIEWING LIFE FROM GOD'S POINT OF VIEW THROUGH HIS WORD AND TRUTH THAT WE SEE ALL OF LIFE IS ABOUT GOD'S GLORY, GOD'S PURPOSES, GOD'S REPUTATION, AND NOT ALL ABOUT ME.**

**** IT IS A CROSS-**CENTERED LIFE, A SLAVE'S** LIFE, A SELFLESS LIFE, NOT IN HOW I AM **AFFECTED, BUT HOW IS GOD'S WORK AFFECTED.** IT IS THINKING OF CHRIST FIRST, OTHERS SECOND AND YOU LAST.

(3) AND ALL OF US WHEN YIELDING TO THE FLESH THINK OF SELF FIRST. **AND IT'S EASY TO DO.** AND WE CAN GET REALLY DEPRESSED WHEN WE LIVE THAT WAY.

* BUT WHEN WE ARE WALKING IN THE SPIRIT, **IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT US, BUT ALL ABOUT HIM** AND OTHERS.

** LET US STRIVE AND YIELD TO THE SPIRIT IN 2013, TO BE MEN AND WOMEN OF GOD, **LOOKING MORE AND MORE AT LIFE FROM GOD'S** PERSPECTIVE. AND IT WILL CHANGE OUR VIEW OF CRITICISM. I CLOSE WITH I CORINTHIANS 10:31, PHILIPPIANS 2:3&4 AND ROMANS 12:10 AND THEN PRAY.