

Home Group Helps

2 Corinthians 12:11-21

An Authentic Apostle

Three characteristics of an Authentic Apostle mentioned in the text:

I. An Authentic Ministry (v.11-12) – ¹¹ I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. ¹² The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.

II. An Authentic Character (v.13-19) – ¹³ For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong! ¹⁴ Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children. ¹⁵ I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶ But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. ¹⁷ *Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? ¹⁸ I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps? ¹⁹ All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.

III. An Authentic Concern (v.20-21) – ²⁰ For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; ²¹ I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

1. Launching Question(s):

- Can you think of a time when you have seen the negative effects of false teaching in a local church or Christian organization?

2. Observation Question(s):

- As you read this text, do you get a sense of how much the Apostle Paul loves the Corinthians and how disappointed he is in their acts of unfaithfulness and disloyalty? How so?

3. Interpretation Question(s):

- According to the sermon, the Apostolic age ended with the death of Apostle John and the completion of the Canon of Scripture. Therefore, “signs, and wonders, and miracles” (v.12) are no longer normative or necessary.
- What is the danger of NOT holding such a view?
- See vs. 20-21. What are the two major types/categories of sin mentioned in this text?
- Why is repentance an essential element of the Christian faith?

4. Reflection Question(s):

- The Church at Ephesus was commended by the Lord for putting “to the test those who call themselves Apostles but are not” (Rev. 2:1-2).
- What is the responsibility of individual church members in guarding the church from false teaching?

5. Application Question(s):

- What can you do this week to better ground yourself in orthodox Christian doctrine?