

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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2 CORINTHIANS 10-11

Philip Pillsbury was a Yale graduate, and a renown connoisseur of fine wines. Born into a famous family, Pillsbury ended up Chairman of the Pillsbury Food Co. But on the factory floor, no other executive was as respected as Philip Pillsbury. He started out as a simple miller - a laborer like everyone else in the plant. And *his three missing fingertips* were proof. Whenever an employee shook the boss' hand, it was a reminder that he was not above doing the same work he was asking of them. Philip Pillsbury understood what it was like in the trenches. His workers loved him.

In a sense, these last four chapters are a handshake with Paul. He shows-off his missing fingertips. There were false teachers who had come to the church at Corinth after Paul left town. They were criticizing and questioning his stature as an apostle. And Paul has been patient. In the first 9 chapters he's explained his ministry - his *methods* and *motives*. But now in chapter 10 he takes the gloves off. He grows more aggressive, and takes on his accusers.

Paul's call was legit! How dare these charlatans belittle God's work! Paul holds up his fingers - his scars and sacrifice - to prove the genuineness of his ministry! In one way, the critics were correct... Paul wasn't physically impressive - he didn't have an overwhelming persona - he wasn't Greece's greatest orator - yet, God demonstrated His strength through Paul's weakness. Paul's missing fingertips, so to speak, were God's opportunity to show Himself strong on Paul's behalf.

Chapter 10, “Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...” One of the errors the Corinthian Christians had made was to mistake “*meekness*” for *weakness*. Numbers 12:3 referred to Moses as “the meekest man in all the earth,” but Moses was far from weak. The Greek word translated “*meekness*” means “*power under restraint*.” It was used for a wild stallion after it was broken. Meekness referred to the person who was submitted to the bit and bridle of God's will. Think of Jesus - no one who's ever lived was as strong and forceful a person as Jesus - yet that power was harnessed and surrendered to the will of God. To this point Paul had approached the Corinthians gently and meekly - but his enemies had interpreted his *meekness as weakness*. In essence they said, “*Paul is kind because he has no clout. He's tender because he's a tenderfoot - he has no real authority.*” They'd mistaken Paul's *humility* for a *lack of ability*.

Paul heard what the Corinthians had said about him. He could write a mean letter, but in person he was timid. Take away his pen and he'll shrink away in fear. Paul replies to these accusations, verse 2, “*But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.*” Paul is saying, “*If you want bold, I'll bring bold!*” He tried to be nice in his first letter, but they took it the wrong way. If he has to be more direct; then he'll be it!

Remember Balaam beat his burro three times, but the problem wasn't his donkey. The animal was swerving to avoid an angel of God in

Balaam's path. Finally, God pitied the burro and opened his mouth. The beast of burden said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me three times?" In essence, "who's the real jackass here?" As Christians we're all called to be beasts of burden. We're servants. God calls us to bear each other's burden - but that doesn't mean we need to allow other people to mistreat us. There comes a time, as with the donkey and as with Paul, when we need to be willing to defend ourselves. Being *used* and being *abused* are not synonymous. Paul loved the Corinthians. He would lay down his life to serve them - but he wasn't going to remain silent while they verbally assaulted him and his ministry!

Verse 3, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh." Paul explains his ministry. He didn't "walk in the flesh" or rely on human ingenuity. He never resorted to gimmicks, or grunt, or grandiose schemes that didn't rely on God's power.

He says in verse 4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God..." Nations don't fight nuclear wars with conventional weapons. Neither do Christians fight a spiritual battle with *fleshly* weapons. Bright ideas, strenuous effort, human manipulations are no substitute for the power of the Holy Spirit.

A bank loan alleviates your cash flow crunch, but how will it corale the greed that causes your spending?... A nicotine patch helps with withdrawals, but does it supply the calm you need the next time your stressed?... A cold shower might relieve some sexual tension, but how do you conquer the lust that churns in your heart?... A bottle of pills will get you to sleep at night, but will it resolve the guilty conscience that keeps you awake?... Here's my point, human remedies may do some good - but *spiritual progress* and *permanent change* is the result of the power and presence of Jesus Christ.

Paul tells us, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds.." *Sin produces strongholds.* It begins as a wrong choice - then it becomes an infatuation - then a habit - then an addiction. It slowly digs an inescapable rut. At first, sin enters our life at our invitation. But ultimately, it outlives its welcome, and becomes extremely difficult to dislodge. It turns into a *stronghold*. And you can't conquer a stronghold with cleverness and manipulation. When a sin burrows itself deep into our psyche, it only gets uprooted from the inside out. It takes spiritual power to bust up a sinful *stronghold*. We need spiritual weapons like... like *the truth of God's Word, the Holy Spirit, prayer, faith, love, the blood of Christ, the word of our testimony, the name of Jesus, fellowship with Christians, worship, wisdom...*

Paul tells us, "casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God..." Strongholds *take root* and *build up* when we believe the lies of the devil - *when we yield to doubts about God, and listen to the arguments against God.*

This is why Paul advises us, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ..." To level a stronghold you have to see yourself and life in Christ. Here's Paul's strategy... *bag up your thoughts!* Take charge of a wandering mind, and fickle emotions. Make every impulse harmonize with the truth that's in Christ. When my son, Mack, was younger I'd take him to hit baseballs. I had two 5 gallon buckets filled with balls. I threw and Mack hit. When he was done we'd have 75 baseballs scattered all over the outfield, and the parking lot. Then we'd gather them up, and return them to the bucket... This is mental image I have of verse 5. We need to gather up every stray thought and put it in God's bucket - bring it into conformity with His will.

And he says in verse 6, "and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." Paul had been disciplining the

Corinthians. Some *repented* - others *resented*. Here, he says once you've reordered your thinking to obey Christ - and have a *disciplined mind*, and live a *disciplined life* - God will use you to *disciple others*.

Paul continues, “Do you look at things according to the outward appearance?” The Corinthians were good at jumping to conclusions. They would size a person up before they heard their heart. *They did this to Paul*. And we need to be careful lest we do this to others...

On a daily basis someone drives down McDaniels Bridge Road and throws a beer bottle into the church yard. At one time, Pastor Jeff was in charge of the grounds, and was usually the guy who picked up the bottles. When he pulled into church in the morning he'd collect bottles, then dump them in his office trash can. I'll never forget one of our ushers needing to discuss a serious issue... He whispered, “Pastor Jeff has a drinking problem. I'm finding beer bottles in his trash.” Obviously, he had jumped to a wrong conclusion. Which happens when you only examine appearances. At least our usher handled it appropriately. He came to the proper authorities. He didn't gossip, and spread false accusations... like the Corinthians did to Paul.

Paul writes, “If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.” Some of the Corinthians doubted Paul was in Christ. *How can you question the Apostle Paul's salvation?* Yet if Paul isn't in Christ, then neither are the Christians in Corinth... since they were all saved through the gospel Paul embraced and preached.

Verse 8, “For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed - lest I seem to terrify you by letters.” The last thing Paul was into was self-promotion. But the Corinthians were forcing him to defend himself. They accused Paul of writing intimidating letters. Paul's ministry was never to *bully*, but to *build up*. Yet to continue to do so, he needs to silence his critics.

Verse 10, “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” In other words, he's mighty with the pen, but he's wimpy and tongue-tied in person. There was some truth to this claim. A third century novel entitled, “*The Acts of Paul and Hecla*,” gives an interesting physical description of the Apostle Paul... “He was small in size with meeting eyebrows, with a rather large nose, bald-headed, bow-legged, strongly built, full of grace, for at times he looked like a man and at times he had the face of an angel.” In other words, you were impressed by his spiritual - not physical traits. Other traditions say that Paul spoke with a lisp. As far as Paul's physical features were concerned he was less than impressive to *look at* or to *listen to*. And this was as far as the false teachers could discern. They noted his *physicality* not his *spirituality*.

I'll never forget the local radio station that refused to air our radio program, *Chapter-By-Chapter*. The station manager didn't like my voice. It wasn't, “radio quality.” I didn't argue with him. I'm sure it's not radio quality. I'm just thankful that doesn't limit God. He's used our program all over the country - on over 300 stations. And this is what the Corinthians were saying about Paul. His voice wasn't “radio quality.” Paul's content was good, but he needed to work on his presentation. The Corinthians liked pastors with bling - entertaining speakers - athletic types - pastors with the air of success. To them, *slick was preferable to substance* - *it was flash over faith* - *style had replaced truth*. Warren Wiersbe tells of a pastor he heard speak who was eloquent, but void of a biblical message. A friend next to him summed up the sermon with a verse - 1 Kings 19:11, “the LORD was not in the wind.” Don't misunderstand, I believe in communicating the Gospel as effectively and attractively as possible. But *the look* is never more important than *the book*. Its not *the splash*, but *the Spirit* that causes spiritual results.

Verse 11, “Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.” When Paul arrives he'll show them just how bold he can be! After this personal appearance, they'll wish he sent a letter.

“For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves.” One of the problems with ministry is the difficulty we have with measuring our progress. It's not like a business where you just check sales or profit margin.

You can be faithful to sow the seed, but that's no guarantee how fruitful you'll be. In Jesus' parable of the sower he teaches us to expect a 25% success rate. Some seed never takes root - other seed is choked by the weeds - still some seed gets burned up by the sun... Only a quarter of the seed actually takes root. If your business is widgets you can measure... *how many you make - how fast you make them - how many you sale - at what price did you sale them...* There's a bottom line to measure - but not so, in ministry.

And notice a big mistake we can make, verse 12, “But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” Christians tend to measure themselves - or their church - against other Christians and other churches. How many people came on Sunday? How big is the building? - or budget? - or staff? We compare against each other. According to Paul this is “*not wise!*” Always remember, much of Christian ministry goes on below the surface - it can't be seen or measured. A pastor can be faithful to God's calling and the 20 people God gives him - or he can be unfaithful in a church of 2000 people! *Citizens of God's kingdom need to be into growth, not stats! There's a difference!*

Verse 13, “We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us - a sphere which especially includes you. Again, God measures success not by what's done, but by how much of what God wanted done gets done. How faithful were you in the sphere God gave you.

“For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ...” Paul's goal was to be faithful within the scope of what God gave. And that included Corinth. Despite what the false teachers said, God had sent Paul to the Corinthians. The Corinthians were part of *Paul's parish!*

And Paul came to Corinth, verse 15, “not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors...” Paul never took credit for what God did through someone else. He wasn't a *glory grabber*. Paul pioneered unreached areas... but as soon as he was gone, these false teachers - the Judaizers - would enter in and takeover churches the apostle had started. This is how cults operate today. They don't target unreached folks. They prey on new Christians - take them before they're grounded and spin their deception.

“But having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.” The false teachers were glory robbers, whereas Paul's passion was to serve! He was into planting new churches. He wanted to go where no man dared to go. Paul's dealt with the Corinthians so their faith would increase, and he could move on to plant new churches.

Verse 17, “But he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” Here's a quote from [Jeremiah 9:24](#)... glory not in wisdom, or might, or riches -

but only in the Lord. Often Christians assume *spiritual success* means *successful service*. Serve God *effectively, efficiently, exhaustively*, and He'll be pleased - not necessarily. According to Jeremiah 9:24 true success has more to do with *knowing the Lord* - than *serving the Lord*. Recall, Martha served Jesus frantically, while Mary just sat at His feet and spent time in His presence - and Jesus said, "**Mary has chosen that good part.**"

Chapter 10 closes, "**For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.**" Pastors can pat each other on the back - and pass out rewards - and boast in our accomplishments - but all that matters is to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and hear, "**Well done good and faithful servant.**" In the final analysis that alone will constitute true success in ministry. That's the ultimate measurement.

Chapter 11, "**Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly and indeed you do bear with me.**" Understand, Paul's whole line of thinking at this point was foreign to him. He didn't usually talk about himself. He usually shunned the spotlight. But here he's turning it on himself - he's forced to defend his ministry. Though necessary, Paul refers to it as "*a little folly.*"

"**For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy.**" Paul wasn't jealous "of" the Corinthians. He was jealous "*for*" Jesus' sake. His Lord deserves a pure and loyal bride. He didn't want her to stray, or be misled!

What if you were the best man at your friend's wedding, and you saw the bride sneak off with another man. You'd hurt for your friend. You'd feel the betrayal. This is how Paul felt when a Christian was disloyal to Jesus... "**For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.**"

Paul viewed himself as a dad, and the Corinthians his daughter. It's a dad's obligation to safeguard his daughter's purity until she's presented to the groom. The Church is the bride. Jesus is our bridegroom. Paul's job was to *watch-over* the Corinthians so he could *turn-them-over* to Jesus - pure and undefiled. This means his care for the Corinthians wasn't *selfish, or territorial, or controlling* - he just wanted to protect the heart of Jesus by safeguarding His bride.

And as your pastor, this is how I feel. I'm a spiritual dad over a large family... *I'm concerned if you stray. And I'm protective of you as well...* When a grandma enters our church with big eyes, and a big nose, and furry whiskers, and big fang-like teeth - even though she calls herself "**grandma**" - it's my job to think "*wolf.*" The dad's job in the family is to protect his daughter, the bride. This was Paul's role in the Corinthian church.

Verse 3, "**But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.**" And Paul was right to worry - for Satan is skillful. Ephesians 6:11 warns us about "**the wiles of the devil.**" Recall, the serpent's ploy in the Garden of Eden? He *doubted* God's Word, "**Has God indeed said?**" He *denied* God's Word, "**You will not surely die.**" Finally, he *distorted* God's Word, "**you will be like God, knowing good and evil...**" but he painted it as a desirable state. Sadly, Eve swallowed the lie, and ate the fruit, and we've all been suffering spiritual heartburn ever since.

Let's all stay true to the simplicity that is in Christ. A wise, old pastor once gave some good advice to his young apprentice. He said, "**Preach a full Gospel: Christ and nothing less. A plain Gospel: Christ and nothing more. A pure Gospel: Christ and nothing else.**" It's the KISS principle - **keep it simple saint!**

“For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted you may well put up with it! Paul was worried about their spiritual discernment. They’d already revealed how gullible they were by putting up with the false teachers who’d lied about him.

“For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.” The false apostles in Corinth went by this title "most eminent apostle" - or literally, "super apostle." Paul laughs - they had nothing on him. He was more of an apostle than they were... “Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge.” Understand how to evaluate a pastor... *What gets said is far more important than how it's said.* I’ve heard it put, "The test of a preacher is that his congregation goes away saying, not 'what a lovely sermon,' but 'I will obey'" God could care less about sermons that *sound good*, if they don't *do any good!*

“But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.” The Corinthians should’ve been ashamed for ever doubting Paul. He’d been with them. He had proven himself during his time among them.

He says in verse 7, “Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?” Here’s how mixed up the false teachers were - they found fault in the integrity Paul showed in his finances.

While living in Corinth, Paul worked with Aquila and Priscilla making tents. He was a bi-vocational pastor. He refused to draw a salary because he didn’t want anyone accusing him of only being out for the money. But instead of recognizing the integrity in this approach, the false teachers were saying Paul didn’t draw a salary because he didn’t deserve one. He lacked the credentials of a true apostle and pastor. Paul explains what he did in verse 8, “I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.” He took finances from the church in Philippi, Berea, and Thessaloniki - to support his work in Corinth.

Verse 9, “And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.” Paul had been so noble in his approach. *How could the Corinthians have turned on him, and doubted him?* Paul was a faithful shepherd, yet the dumb sheep in Corinth chose to follow wolves in sheep’s clothing. We marvel at their stupidity, yet it gets repeated each week in America. I know pastors who love the Lord, and their people dearly, and make personal sacrifices to serve them - yet they get mistreated by the church. Whereas, I know other pastors who dominate and manipulate the people and use them for their own ends. Yet the church treats them like royalty. *The pompous preacher* is loved more than *the man of God*. This is what happened in Jeremiah's day. Jeremiah 5:31 tells us, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so." It’s sad, but *fleshly people* like *flashy, forceful preachers*. They don't like men who remind them to *walk humbly and live sacrificially*.

Paul tells us in verse 10, “As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!” All this effort to prove himself has nothing to do with Paul. He loves the believers in Corinth! “But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.” Paul boasts and defends himself, to shut up the false teachers who boast for no reason.

Verse 13, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.” The false teachers called

themselves "super apostles," in reality they were only "pseudo apostles." They were bogus. They majored in deceit!

Paul says it shouldn't surprise the Corinthians to see Christianity feigned. He explains, "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Jesus referred to Satan as "a wolf in sheep's clothing" whereas Paul called him "an angel of light." Shakespeare said, "The devil hath power to assume a pleasing shape." Satan is a master of disguise. He goes by a million aliases - has a zillion fake IDs and phony passports... he hates to be identified. Don't expect Satan to appear in red leotards, and horns, and a pointed tail - carrying a pitchfork. Satan is too sophisticated to come at you as you would expect. The element of surprise is a most effective weapon. Expect the enemy to attack wearing a short skirt and low-cut blouse... Or as a father-figure, an old guy, you can really trust... Or he's the friend who tells you he has the stuff that can help you kick your depression... Just take one... and your problems will be gone!

Expect Satan to offer you a deal so sweet, you almost miss *the fine print*, and overlook *the one catch*. Is it any wonder the two products with the cleverest commercials are *beer* and the *lotto*? I wish once they showed the truth - *a family getting evicted because of an gambling dad - or a drunk with his head in the toilet*.

Paul concludes his caution on appearance. It can be deceiving... in verse 15, "Therefore it is no great thing if his (Satan's) ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." If Satan can appear as an angel of light, obviously his demons can also appear in a Valentino suit, with "Reverend" in front of his name. They need to beware of false apostles and pastors.

Verse 16, "I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting." Again, he isn't in the habit of boasting about himself, but Paul knows he needs to muster a defense.

Verse 18, "Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast." He's stooping to the level of the Corinthians. He's speaking in terms they understand. Read the next statement with sarcasm, "For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!" *The Great Corinthians thought they were so wise, they'll surely tolerate Paul's foolishness for a moment...*

"For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face." They tolerated the foolish boasting of false apostles who were out to exploit them, *why not listen to Paul?*

Notice the list of crimes done by the false apostles, "put in bondage, devour, take, exalt himself, strike..." Here's the modus operandi of a false "man of God." Here's how bogus men manipulate and control folks... Through "bondage" - they're great at legalistic guilt trips. They "devour" - they *prey on people*, not *pray for people*. They're on the "take." If they do give please ask, "what's in it for them?" There's an ulterior motive. They "exalt themselves" - rather than grow they swell, and there's a huge difference. Finally they "strike you on the face" - or they try to control you by insult. Why would anyone put up with such shenanigans in the name of God. Paul is amazed at the *gullible* Corinthians - and he's angry at the *diabolical* men passing themselves off as apostles of Christ. Verse 21, "To our shame, I say that we were too weak for that!" Again note his sarcasm. His critics had accused him of being weak. He's saying, "Yes, I'm glad I'm too weak to abuse you in such a brazen way."

“But in whatever anyone is bold - I speak foolishly - I am bold also.” Paul will match credentials with anyone. These false apostles have nothing on him, “Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.” Despite whatever they’re claiming Paul can match their qualifications.

Paul's love for the Corinthians reminds me of a man who asked his wife, "Honey, did you ever love anyone before me?" His wife thought a bit, and then replied... "No, darling. I once respected a man for his great intelligence. I admired another man for his remarkable courage. I was captivated by yet by another man for his good looks and charm. But with you, darling, well how else could I explain it, except love?" What motivated Paul to love the fool-hearty Corinthians, could've only have been the love of God. Yet love them he did. Paul has reminded them of *his jealousy toward them, his generosity to them* - now he grows bolder - he innumerates *his sufferings for them*, all he went through to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles!

Verse 23, “Are they ministers of Christ? - I speak as a fool... (again, Paul doesn’t like to have to boast.) “Are they ministers of Christ? I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often...” And in the next few verses Paul is going to hold up his missing fingertips. He reveals this amazing list of sufferings - *many of which go unmentioned in the book of Acts*. All we know about some of these episodes we learn from this list.

Verse 24, “From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods...” We have the account of only one, Acts 16. “Once I was stoned...” This is mentioned in Acts 14, and referred to in Galatians 6:17. Paul was the victim of a flash mob who stoned him and left him for dead. “Three times I was shipwrecked...” Only one shipwreck is mentioned in the NT - Acts 27. “A night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren...” This was the result of *persecution from the enemy*. But he also suffered from the *execution of his ministry*... “in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness...” All he endured to bring them the Gospel.

And to top it off - here’s the icing on the cake that was Paul’s ministry, verse 28, “besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.” And this may’ve been Paul’s most relentless stress. It was a concern he carried daily. In all his waking moments the health of the churches weighed on his mind and heart. All other issues were secondary to what he calls “*my deep concern*.” And as a pastor, here’s where I know a little of Paul’s heart. Even on my day off - I’m not off - I still think of the church and the people who constitute the church. The churches I pastor are also “*my deep concern*.”

Verse 29, “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?” Paul cared so deeply he got emotional over their plight. He bled when he heard someone was wounded.

“If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.” Paul is saying, if you want proof of my apostleship, here it is... *but he doesn’t point to statistics... number of converts and churches planted*... Instead, he points to his sufferings. To Paul it was not his *stars* - but his *scars* that proved his legitimacy.

Verse 31, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.” Okay, Paul has been boasting - so what byline will he use to illustrate his pinnacle of success? How does he want to top off his resume? Preaching in Athens? Or planting churches in Asia? *How about a sneaky exit from Damascus? He was let down the wall like a baby in a basket...* not exactly the most flattering picture for a promotional packet. Here was Paul's point... the false teachers in Corinth said God chose them because of their exceptional talents and righteousness. Paul said just the opposite... He was nothing special. He was weak, ordinary, needy - yet God in His grace chose Paul to do great things! What kind of guy would you want to follow... A guy full of pride, or a guy dependent on God's grace? Would you rather follow an Ivy League debutante, or a fellow worker with three missing fingertips who knew your heart? *Paul was the guy without the fingertips...*