

Understanding Weakness Biblically - The Apostle's Thorn

1. What comes to mind when you think of weakness?
2. Why are we afraid to talk about weakness?
3. Is human weakness a liability or an asset?

2 Corinthians 10:12-11:4

¹² For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 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. ¹⁴ 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; ¹⁵ not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, ¹⁶ to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

¹⁷ But "he who glories, let him glory in the LORD." ¹⁸ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

11 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly—and indeed you do bear with me. ² For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 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. ⁴ 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 and False Apostles

⁵ For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. ⁶ Even though *I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not in knowledge. But we have [□]been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

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? ⁸ I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you. 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*. ¹⁰ As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

¹² 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. ¹³ For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. ¹⁵ Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

1. What does Paul's willingness to suffer for the gospel prove?
2. How does Satan get a foothold in the church?
3. What are the marks of a true apostle of Christ?
4. What are the marks of a false apostle of Christ?