



*<sup>11</sup> I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. 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.*

- Paul is forced to speak of himself by those who should have been quick to have vindicated him and his service in love.
- This was painful for Paul, because he is not treating sin, but he is showing the utter weakness in the Christian is to be displaced by the strength of Christ.
- It was ignorance therefore to contrast him with those surpassingly (super) apostles in this respect.
- Rather it was true that in nothing was he behind them, though as he says he was nothing, and quite content to be so.

## Paul lists at least 8 proofs of a true apostle of Christ:

1. Paul's revelations directly from Christ - 12:1-6
2. Paul's thorn in the flesh and grace - 12:7-10
3. Paul's equality with the most eminent apostles - 12:11
4. Paul manifested the signs of an apostle from God - 12:12
5. Paul seeks not what they have – but them - 12:13-14;16-18
6. Paul loves them & is concerned about their spiritual lives - 12:15
7. Paul never defends the life & ministry of Christ through him - 12:19
8. Paul mourns over & is ready to correct those walking in the flesh - 12:20,21



***<sup>12</sup> The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.***

- **The signs** (a distinguishing sign) manifested through Paul by the Holy Spirit  
*Romans 15:18-19 (NASB)*  
*<sup>18</sup> For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,*  
*<sup>19</sup> in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*
- **Signs and wonders** Acts 15:12 (NASB) Supernatural events  
*<sup>12</sup> All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.*
- **“miracles”** - δύναμις, *dynamis* - the power of working miracles  
- Acts 19:11 (NASB)  
*<sup>11</sup> God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul.*

*<sup>13</sup> 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!*

Paul asks for forgiveness because he didn't treat the Corinthians with the same authority he had as an apostle like he treated the other churches.

Paul and his companions never put a financial burden on the Corinthians.

He asks them to forgive him the wrong of never accepting support or favors from that rich church.

*<sup>14</sup> 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 (tekna) are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.***

- Paul is going back for the third time.
- He will not be a financial burden to them.
- He would not seek any possession of theirs.
- He would seek **them**.

**Why does he say children are not responsible for their parents?**

As an analogy, I am your spiritual father, and I am coming to provide for you.

***15 I will most gladly spend (totally spent out) and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?***

Paul says that he would spend and spend all of his resources for their souls. He is after them to grow into what they were saved to be.

**What is Paul spending?**

God's love for them through him.

Less love on your part will not lessen my love for you.  
This shows a dependence upon God Himself.

***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.***

He didn't take any money when he was there, but they called him a *crafty fellow*.

**Why does Paul say: “*crafty fellow that I am, I took you by deceit*” –**

Paul is alluding to a charge that he availed himself of the collection for the poor to secure money for himself.



***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?***

Here Paul avoids the cunningly mischievous insinuation of any who might charge him with reaping monetary advantage indirectly through his friends.

Did I take advantage of you by of any of them whom I sent unto you?

I exhorted Titus and sent the brother with [him]:

Did Titus take any advantage of you?

Didn't they walk in the same spirit as I do?

*<sup>19</sup> 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.*

Are they thinking all this time that we are trying to defend ourselves to them?

My final court of judgment regarding my behavior is God, not you.

**What are we being judged about?**

Building up the new man in Christ, the inner man.

He rejects carefully all thought of self-interest or fear: *"but all things, beloved, for your building up."* Love never fails, and it builds up. For this he spoke and worked and suffered.

*<sup>20</sup> 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; .....*

It was the fear of their condition and its consequences for themselves and to his own heart which had hindered his going to Corinth when he had intended; and the delay had exposed him to slander ever since.

Fearful that the conditions would be unacceptable to him and he to them.

.....*that perhaps there will be strife,  
jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance,  
disturbances;*

Strife/quarrels - jealousy/fierceness

Angry tempers/wrath – disputes/factions

Slanders/evil speaking – gossip/whispering

Arrogance/inflated egos – disturbances/disorder

It has been pre-eminently remarked of this very chapter with truth that it contains the most striking contrasts among those that bear the name of the Lord.

***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.***

I'm afraid I'm going to be embarrassed before God by your sinfulness.

To find saints in sin was God humbling Paul in their presence, not them in his, as it looked as a fact.

**But what a tale is told of feeble faith?**

For faith it is that overcomes; and they were overcome with evil, not overcoming it with good.

## Application of the principles of true ministry

Vv. 11: It is proper for believers to uphold the ministry of a proven man.

Vv. 13-14: True ministers do not seek or pursue what a believer has, rather he pursues the believer.

Vv. 15: True ministers spend themselves for the benefit of the believers.

Mark 10:45

Vv. 17-18: True ministers do not defraud their ministry and are careful that those he serves do not defraud.

Vv. 19: True ministers always edify with a view to growth. Not for the defense of themselves, but will what they do be for the edification of believers.

Vv. 20-21: True ministers encourage other positive ministries. All ministry is hampered by sin so the true minister encourages repentance.