

Homework #17 - *The Life That Speaks Louder Than Words*
II Corinthians 12:11-21

"We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening. --II Corinthians 12:19

Day One:

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:11-21. What are the key words?

Contrasts in Corinthians: What opposites do you notice in this passage?

2. What did the Corinthians not do, that they should have done? (12:11)

What has Paul had to do, as a result?

3. What are Paul's credentials? (12:11-12)

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

4. How is Paul's humility evident in 12:11?

5. Read Acts 18:1-11. What was the main emphasis and activity of Paul's ministry in Corinth?

Does this account mention any "signs, wonders and miracles"?

How does 2 Corinthians 12:12 describe Paul's ministry?

After reading the story in Acts 18:1-11, why do you think "great perseverance" was needed?

Why do you think Paul reminds them now of the miraculous aspect of his ministry among them?

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6. How does Paul describe his relationship with the Corinthians? (12:13)

Read Romans 2:11 and Job 34:19. How does God treat people?
Why?

What does Paul write to Timothy in I Timothy 5:21?

Why is this so important in serving others?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

8. Have you ever had to defend yourself or your motive for serving others? What can you learn from Paul in his defense to the Corinthians?

Day Two

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:14-15. What is Paul's plan? (12:14)

What does Paul really want?

What does Paul really not want?

2. What will this friendship cost Paul? (12:15)

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. Why do you think Paul must clarify that he is not after their possessions but the relationship? (12:14)

Why is this important to clear up before his next visit?

4. What analogy does Paul use to illustrate his relationship with them? (12:14)

Why is this analogy appropriate for Paul and the Corinthians?

How does 12:15 also express a parent's heart?

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5. What important question does Paul ask in 12:15b? What do you think this means?
6. Read I Corinthians 13:4-7. Write down those aspects of love that are seen in Paul's response to these people:
7. Read Luke 10:27-37. What is the second command after loving God? (10:27b)

How did the Samaritan love his neighbor?

Why is Paul's life an example of this? (12:15)

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

8. Do you realize the quality of relationship God wants to have with you? He wants you and His purpose is for your good. How does Paul's example help you to understand God's great love for you? How does it change your relationships with others?

Day Three

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read II Corinthians 12:16-18. How many times does Paul use the word "burden" in this week's section? (12:11-18)

What is a word similar in meaning that is also repeated? (12:17-18)

2. What does Paul say about his close friends and co-workers? (12:17-18)

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. What tongue-in-cheek phrase does Paul use in 12:16?

Can you guess what is the accusation of Paul's opposition?

4. Read Proverbs 13:20. How does our choice of friends reflect on our character?

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- How do Paul's friends reflect his own priorities and values? (12:17-18)
6. Read 2 Corinthians 8:20-21. Why was it important how Paul handled their money?
 7. Write a definition for "exploit":

What affect does "having an agenda" have on a relationship, in which one person just wants to use the other and not have a relationship?

Explain the difference between God's desire to use a person, and His never exploiting the person:
 8. Read John 15:5. How are we ever useful or "fruitful" to God?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

9. Do you understand that God wants to use your life, and yet will never ask you to do anything apart from a relationship with Him? Write how this truth speaks to your life:

Day Four

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:19-20a. What might the Corinthians be thinking? (12:19)

What is Paul's basis and reason for writing this letter?

2. What is Paul's first fear in 12:20a?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. What do you think it means to "speak in the sight of God"?

Why does living for God's approval set us free from self-defense or "defending ourselves to you"?

4. What amazing statement does Paul make in 12:19c regarding their motives?

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Why can Paul say this? Read the following verses for your answer:
2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:12, 15; 5:13; 11:9-10; 12:15.

5. What do you think Paul want them to be (12:20a)? Read 2 Corinthians 11:2-3 to help with your answer.

How might the Corinthian's want Paul to be? Read 2 Corinthians 10:10 for your answer:

How do our personal expectations color our relationships with others?

Why is it important to have God's expectations for ourselves and others?

6. What does Paul call the Corinthians in 12:19b?

What impact do godly friendships have on this world for God's purpose?

How does this explain Paul's determination to be understood by the Corinthians?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

7. What is your approach to the people in your life? Do you see them as part of God's greater purpose in this world? Do you ask God for His perspective of them? Meditate on Paul's words in 12:19. Now write this verse in your own words:

Day Five

Observe: What does the passage say?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 12:20-21. What is Paul's second fear, concerning their *relationships*, in 12:20b?
2. What else does Paul fear concerning their *lifestyle* in 12:21?

Interpret: What does the passage mean?

3. Read Ephesians 4:13-16. How do we become mature in Christ?

Can a believer in Christ be mature without love and quality relationships with others? Explain:

What does Paul's fear (12:20) tell you about the Corinthians?

4. The city of Corinth was known for its sexual promiscuity. Why do you think Paul's concerns are valid?

Would Paul's concerns also apply to our culture? Explain:

5. How would you define the word "grieve"? (12:21)

What would grieve Paul? (12:21)

6. Read Ephesians 4:30-5:4. How do we imitate God, in verses 5:1-2?

What grieves the Holy Spirit?

Read Luke 15:8-10. What causes God great joy?

Apply: What does the passage mean to me?

7. Do you want to grow up and be like Christ? Are there any areas in your life that are stunting your growth and grieving the Holy Spirit? Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you to "live a life of love" in your *relationships* and in your *lifestyle*!