

Studies In Second Corinthians

(II Corinthians 12:11-21)

1. In what way did Paul become a fool?

In glorying: *"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing"* (II Corinthians 12:11).

- Any glorying Paul did was to illustrate a point and such was done as a fool would do (II Corinthians 11:16-17).
- Paul did not try to elevate himself to them (I Corinthians 3:4-7).
- He is not a lesser Apostle (II Corinthians 11:5; cf. Galatians 2:9). Though, he did not feel he "earned" his equality (I Corinthians 15:8-10).
- He emphasized, "though I be nothing" (Ephesians 3:8; cf. Luke 17:7-10).

2. What type of signs did Paul work among the Corinthians?

The signs of an Apostle: *"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds"* (II Corinthians 12:12).

- Romans 15:18-19 and I Corinthians 14:18; cf. Mark 16:15-20.

3. What wrong did Paul ask forgiveness for?

Not burdening the Corinthians financially: *"For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong"* (II Corinthians 12:13).

- He did not take support from them (II Corinthians 11:8), though he was worthy of it (I Corinthians 9:1-14).
- Had he taken support from them, they would have fruit on their account (Philippians 4:14-17).
- That being said, their carnal minds certainly would have given them accusation against him had he "preached for money" (as some point it even to this day).

4. What point did Paul make in talking about how parents ought to care for their children?

How he did not want to burden them: *"Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children"* (II Corinthians 12:14).

- This is the third PLAN (II Corinthians 13:1) he had to come (I Corinthians 4:19, I Corinthians 11:34, and II Corinthians 1:15).
- He sees himself as a father of sorts to those he's teaching (I Corinthians 4:17, I Thessalonians 2:7-12, I Timothy 1:2, and Titus 1:4).

5. How was Paul's love for the Corinthians received by them?

They didn't return it: *"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved"* (**II Corinthians 12:15**).

- Paul was willing to be spent [carnally and physically] for Christians (**Romans 9:1-5, II Corinthians 1:6, Philippians 2:17, and Colossians 1:24**).
- His love was not returned though (**Proverbs 9:8, John 7:7, and Galatians 4:16**).

6. How did Paul catch the Corinthians with guile?

This Scripture is not a clear one and takes some reasoning to get through. What you do know is that Paul caught them with guile: *"But be it so, I did not burden you: nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you with guile"* (**II Corinthians 12:16**)?

- Clearly, Paul's goal was NOT to burden them (**II Corinthians 11:9**).
- We KNOW that Paul was not using trickery or guile (**II Corinthians 4:2, II Corinthians 7:2, and I Thessalonians 2:3-5**). So, we cannot conclude this verse comes close to meaning this. In context, they were listening to fools, he illustrated that as speaking in such a similar manner, and now he is saying "you're busted".
- The word translated "crafty" [Strong's # 3835] can mean: "in a good sense, fit to undertake and accomplish anything, dexterous, wise, sagacious, skillful. In a bad sense, crafty, cunning, knavish, treacherous, deceitful" (Thayer).
 - Jesus taught to be wise as a serpent (**Matthew 10:16**). In the LXX it is used in a good way in **Proverbs 13:1** (wise), **Proverbs 14:8**, and **Proverbs 14:15** (prudent).
 - Paul was using godly wisdom to examine the Corinthians (**Ephesians 5:15-17**).
- The term translated caught [Strong's # 2983] has some unclear meanings too. Normally, it is translated receive/received (@ 133 times) or take/took (@106 times).
 - The word is used in a similar manner as in this verse in the following Scriptures: **Matthew 15:26, Matthew 21:39, and Mark 12:3**.
 - Look at how this same words is translated differently in just one verse to the Corinthians: "For 1063 who 5101 maketh 1252 0 thee 4571 to differ 1252 [from another]? and 1161 what 5101 hast thou 2192 that 3739 thou **didst2983** 0 not 3756 **receive2983** ? 1161 now if 1499 thou didst **receive2983** [it], why 5101 dost thou glory 2744, as 5613 if thou **hadst2983** 0 not 3361 **received2983** [it]" (**I Corinthians 4:7**)?
 - Consider this, this same Greek word is part of the word translated as "overtaken" in (**Galatians 6:1**).
- The word translated "guile" (Strong's # 1388) clearly is a term that shows they were deceptive/subtle and such is wrong (**Acts 13:10, Romans 1:29, I Peter 2:1, and I Peter 3:10**).

7. Did Paul try to gain from them in any way?

No: *“(17) Did I make a gain of you by any of them whom I sent unto you? (18) I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother. Did Titus make a gain of you? walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps” (II Corinthians 12:17-18)?*

- His motive in sending Titus was to help (**I Corinthians 4:17**).
- The same was true when Titus was being sent with another brother (**II Corinthians 8:16-24**).

8. To what end did Paul do all things?

For their edification: *“Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying” (II Corinthians 12:19).*

- Paul was not looking to make excuses for himself (**II Corinthians 3:1**).
- His work was not selfish (**I Corinthians 10:33**), but for their edification (**I Corinthians 14:26**).

9. What fear did Paul have concerning the Corinthians?

That when he was to come to them he would not find them doing what they should be doing: *“For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: (21) And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed” (II Corinthians 12:20-21).*

- Paul wanted them to be right (**II Corinthians 13:9**), but did not feel such was the case for sure.
- There were debates [contentions] among them in the past (**I Corinthians 1:11**).
- Other fleshly things, which should not have been (**Galatians 5:19-21**), were a fear for Paul too.
- Paul had boasted of them and if he finds otherwise when he gets there that would humiliate him (cf. **II Corinthians 9:3-4**). We should not understand this in a way that Paul did not want to abase himself that they could be exalted for he had already done that (**II Corinthians 11:7**).