

Pray for your time together in God's Word!

Read the passage out loud as a group. Option: Give the group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

This Week's Passage

Scripture Reference

2 Corinthians 11:1-15 (NIV)

¹ I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me! ² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. ³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

⁵ I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles." ⁶ I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way. ⁷ Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? ⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. ⁹ And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. ¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. ¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Discussion

Ask the Group: What about this passage stood out to you?

Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them to specific discussion. Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate about personal understandings—keep it more on the "observation" level.

Ask the Group: In vs. 2, why does Paul feel jealous for the Corinthians "with a godly jealousy"?

Possible Answer: He promised them to Christ, but he's afraid they are deceived and their minds are led astray by their devotion because they believe in whoever claims to speak about Jesus (vs. 3-4).

- Who are those people Paul is afraid are deceiving the Corinthians?

Possible Answer: The false or super-apostles mentioned in vs. 5 and 13

Tell the Group: Paul wants to protect the Corinthians' "sincere and pure devotion to Christ" and keep their minds from being led astray (vs. 3).

Ask the Group: At the end of vs. 4, Paul says "you put up with it [false teachings] easily enough." What does Paul mean by this phrase?

Possible answer: He's saying they are putting up with it and being deceived, like Eve was with the serpent (vs. 3).

- **Ask the Group:** What should the Corinthians be doing instead?

Possible answer: They should know the true Jesus, true Spirit, and true gospel, and then recognize and resist all counterfeits.

Ask the Group: What false teachings do we tend to "put up with" in our world today?

Leaders' Note: Be careful that this doesn't become grounds for a rant on some social or theological issue. Possible answers: Ideas about what we find our worth in (social status, finances, etc.), false ideas of who God is (His character), etc.

Ask the Group: Vs. 15 says that these "super-apostles" often "masquerade as servants of righteousness." How does Paul distinguish himself from them?

Possible answer: He's not inferior to them, he may be unskilled in speaking, but he is not in his knowledge. He did not accept money from them or burden them. They don't work "on the same terms." (vs. 7-12)

- **Ask the Group:** How does Paul intend to undermine the claim of the super-apostles and show them as false?

Possible answer: Paul will continue preaching the true gospel "in order to cut the ground from under" the false apostles (vs. 12).

Tell the Group: Remember, Paul is defending himself in this entire letter because he wants the Corinthians to believe in and recognize the truth of Jesus Christ. As previously said in vs. 1, he wants them to believe the truth and not be led astray.

Ask the Group: What are ways that we can be led astray to believe false things about Jesus, the Spirit, and the gospel?

Possible answers: We aren't familiar with the gospel, believing that we have to earn our salvation and that God wants us to be perfect all the time. We look at the good works or intentions of someone, and don't compare it to the truth of the gospel, etc.

Ask the Group: How can we resist these false messages?

Possible answers: Read, study, and preach the gospel. Surround yourself with godly friends who speak truth into your life, etc.

- **Ask the Group:** What does it look like for us, like Paul, to not only resist, but also go on the offensive and undermine (fight against) false messages?

Possible answers: boldly speak the Truth when interacting with others, even when it's uncomfortable, etc.

Gospel Application

Ask the Group (small or large): What false messages do you encounter in your life?

- **Ask the Group:** This week, how can you resist the false messages and remain devoted to Christ?

Ask the Group (small or large): What does it look like for you to stand up for the true gospel?

- **Ask the Group:** How can you stand up for the true gospel this week?

Suggestion: Send this application question and challenge out during the week to encourage your group.

Last Week's Application: (Discuss if time)

Ask the Group (small or large): Do you “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (vs. 5)?

- **Ask the Group (small or large):** What is one thing you can do this week to keep your thoughts captive for the Lord?

Ask the Group (small or large): Paul writes about the importance of sharing the Gospel in new regions. Think of one person whom you could connect with this week who doesn't know the truth of the Gospel.