

## 19. Learning to Glory in the Lord

In our last topic, we saw how to show our physical and spiritual children how to respond when others reject us. Some of the Corinthians had rejected Paul because of the false teachers. Paul made it clear that he had a great love for the Corinthians and continued to love them even if some of them chose to reject him. He would continue to pray for those who rejected him. We are going to see in our topic today from the example of Paul that we should not even try to compare ourselves with false teachers who might speak against us. Instead, we want to show our children how to glory in the Lord.

In 2 Corinthians 10:12, we read, “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.” The word that is translated “dare” means *to deal boldly with other people*. As a result, Paul is saying that he would not even think of classing himself or comparing himself with those who commend themselves. The phrase that is translated “to class ourselves” means *to judge worthy to be admitted to a certain class of people*. Here, we see the humility of Paul. He did not even want to try to compare himself with the false teachers who talked about themselves.

The word that is translated “to commend” means *to stand with others so that we can show or prove that we are as good as they are*. Paul was only concerned about the approval of one person. 1 Corinthians 4:4 says, “For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.” Here, we see that Paul was concerned about the approval of the Lord but he did not care if people gave their approval to him. We also want to show our children by our example that our only concern is the approval of the Lord in the things that we do.

Paul said that those who measure themselves by themselves or compare themselves among themselves are not wise. That was exactly what the false teachers were doing. When people compare and measure themselves by others, it will produce one of two responses. Some people pick out the things that they do right and compare them with the things that other people do wrong. Such people will always win in their own eyes. Other people will do the opposite. They will pick out the failures in their own lives and compare them with the successes of others. These people will always feel like failures in their lives. Paul said that both groups lack understanding. Romans 14:4 says, “Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.” We want to show our children how to live to please the Lord realizing that He is the One who is able to make them stand.

Paul gives us an example of true humility. He did not live to try and please others. As a result, he went on to write in 2 Corinthians 10:13-16, “We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us--a sphere which especially includes you. 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; 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, to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another

man's sphere of accomplishment.”

Paul and Timothy said that they would not boast about their accomplishments. Instead, they said that they would continue to work within the sphere to which God had appointed them. In Galatians 2:9, we read about the sphere that God had given to Paul. That verse says, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.” Here, we see that God had called Paul to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to realize that they were a part of that sphere because the city of Corinth was a Gentile city.

Paul and those who traveled with him were not overextending themselves when they went to the city of Corinth. The word that is translated “overextending” means *to extend beyond the prescribed bounds*. Instead, they were being obedient to the Lord. Here, we see that the only concern of Paul was to bring glory to the Lord by being obedient to Him. That was why he had been obedient to the Lord and had brought the Gospel to the city of Corinth. Earlier in the trip when Paul came to Corinth, the Lord had closed the door to Asia and Paul had been obedient. Acts 16:6-8 says, “Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.” Here, we see that Paul and Timothy wanted the leading of the Lord wherever they went.

Paul and Timothy also did not want to boast or take any credit for anything that some other person had done. Here, we see a key principle that we want to demonstrate to our physical and spiritual children. Those who have an attitude of pride want to boast about their accomplishments. In contrast, those who have a humble attitude choose to be obedient to Christ so that all glory will go to Christ. In fact, they also had confidence that as the Christians in Corinth continued to mature, they would also become partners in ministry with Paul and Timothy.

Paul and Timothy looked forward to the fact that the Corinthians would become partners with them in taking the Gospel to other areas. That would continue to expand their outreach to areas that had not heard the Gospel. The next immediate place Paul wanted to go, after going with those who took their gift for the needy in Jerusalem, was Rome. Acts 19:21 says, “When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, ‘After I have been there, I must also see Rome.’” Paul knew that Rome was the key city to reach out to the entire Roman Empire and so he looked forward to the opportunity to serve the Lord in that city which was the largest city in the Roman Empire.

However, Paul had a desire to reach even further than the city of Rome. In Romans 15:24, Paul wrote, “Whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your *company* for a while.” Paul explained why he wanted to go to Spain in Romans 15:20-21 where we read, “And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; and those who

have not heard shall understand.” Paul just wanted to bring glory to God by being obedient to Him by taking the Gospel to those who had not heard.

Then, Paul explained why he did not want to be like the false teachers who were commending themselves by comparing themselves with others. Paul explained his attitude in 2 Corinthians 10:17-18, where we read, “But ‘he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’ For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” Paul did not want to glory or boast about what he had done for the Lord.

Instead, Paul wanted to talk about what the Lord had done for him. Paul expressed this attitude so well in a letter that he wrote to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 1:12-15, Paul wrote, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.” Paul looked back at his own life and realized the great mercy that the Lord had shown to him. He realized that there was nothing in his life about which he could glory. He was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor and an insolent man. Christ had taken his life and had transformed him.

As a result of what the Lord had done for him in his life, Paul realized why we should give thanks to the Lord in everything. Paul encouraged others to have the same attitude that he had. That is why he wrote in Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” In the same way, we want to show our children by our example that we want to give glory for what the Lord has done in our lives and not what we have done.

Like Paul, we need to look forward to the day when the Lord gives his approval for our ministry and not spend our time here on earth talking about what we have done. As Paul came to the end of his life, he wrote in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.” Here, we see that Paul had one goal in his life. That was to please the Lord when he stood before the Lord. Paul gave us an example as he looked forward to hearing the words of the Lord. In Matthew 25:21, we read, “‘His lord said to him, “Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”” These are the words Paul desired and will hear from Christ. As we show our children by our example to learn to glory in what the Lord has done in our lives, they will also learn to glory in what the Lord has done in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children by your example what it means to glory in the Lord.