





REDEEMER

# Power *in* weakness


2 CORINTHIANS



I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.




For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles.




Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things.


Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge?




I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way.



As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!




And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.





And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

- 2 Corinthians 11:1-15


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1. The value of spiritual discernment
  2. Our need for spiritual discernment
  3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment


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1. The value of spiritual discernment

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1. The value of spiritual discernment
    - a. Who we are in Christ
    - b. Who Paul is to the Church


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1. The value of spiritual discernment
    - a. Who we are in Christ

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (v. 2-3)

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1. The value of spiritual discernment
  - b. Who Paul is to the Church

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Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. (v. 7-9)

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1. The value of spiritual discernment
  - b. Who Paul is to the Church

And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! (v.11)

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1. The value of spiritual discernment

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2. Our need for spiritual discernment

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2. Our need for spiritual discernment

We are easily deceived



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (v.3)



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

The serpent replied to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5)



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

Deception: lies that look like the truth.



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

a. We are susceptible to deception because we inherit a deceived, rebellious nature ("Original Sin").



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."  
- Romans 5:12



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

b. The pattern of deception is the same everytime: take our eyes off of God, and put it on ourselves.



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. (v.4)



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

The pattern of deception is the same everytime: take our eyes off of God, and put it on ourselves.



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

"Christians are especially open to the kind of cunning deceit that combines the language of faith and religion with the content of self-interest and flattery. We like to be told how special we are, how wise, how blessed... we like to have our Christianity shaped less by the cross than by triumphalism or rules or charismatic leaders or subjective experience..."



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

...And if this shaping can be coated with the assurances of orthodoxy, complete with cliché, we may not detect the presence of the arch-deceiver, nor see that we are being weaned away from 'sincere and pure devotion to Christ' to a 'different gospel.'"  
- D.A. Carson



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

Paul expresses our need for spiritual discernment, by shedding light on the reality of our spiritual enemy!



## 2. Our need for spiritual discernment

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. (v.13-15)



2. Our need for spiritual discernment



2. Our need for spiritual discernment

"Satan doesn't come to us as Satan, neither does sin present itself as sin." - Charles Hodge



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment

A. Test the words



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment

A. Test the words

Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. (v.6)



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment

A. Test the words

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. (1 John 4:1-3)



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment  
B. Watch the works



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment  
B. Watch the works

Their end will correspond to their deeds. (v.15)



3. How we can grow in spiritual discernment  
B. Watch the works

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits... A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.” - Matthew 7:15-18



**Spiritual Discernment Is Invaluable**  
2 Corinthians 11:1-15