



The Devastation of Comparison and The Joy of God's Approval

2 Corinthians 10:7-16
June 5, 2022

The Big Idea: Faced with searing criticism and constant comparisons to "super-apostles" who showed up in Corinth after Paul started the church there, Paul calls us back to our **salvation** and **identity** in Christ. Comparing oneself to others will always lead to the sins of either **pride** or **envy**. The way of escape is live in the joy of God's approval.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH PAUL:

- Paul brought the **Gospel** of Jesus to Corinth, led many there to faith in Christ, and started the church.
- Wherever Christ and truth is presented, Satan will seek to **obscure** and **confuse** the people who have come to faith (or are interested in knowing more).
- False teachers and "wolves" have come to town and view themselves as "Super-Apostles". They constantly **criticize** and seek to **undermine** Paul.

2 Corinthians 10:7-16 (ESV)

10 ⁷Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. ⁸For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. ⁹I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters. ¹⁰For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." ¹¹Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present. ¹²**Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.**

¹³But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. ¹⁴For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But *our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged,* ¹⁶*so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence.* ¹⁷**"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."**

HOW COMPARING YOURSELF BRINGS DEVASTATION

- It breeds **discontent**, destroying gratitude for how the Lord made us and what He has given us. [Psalm 139:14]
- It leads us to be **envious** of others. [Proverbs 14:30; Eccl. 4:4]
- It can lead to **pride** and arrogance about others. [Philippians 2:3]
- It can put the spotlight and focus on **ourselves** rather than the Lord. [2 Corinthians 10:17]
- It is **spiritually** dangerous, leading us to think God is impressed and will accept us on the basis of how we compare to other people. [Luke 18:11-14]

THE HUGE EXCEPTION TO THE RULE:

"Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ."

1 Corinthians 11:1 (ESV)

THE WAY OUT OF THE TRAP AND TO FREEDOM:

- Put your focus consistently on **Christ**, not self. [2 Cor. 10:17]
- Learn and live in your true identity. **In Christ I am ...**

👑 Justified [Ro. 8:1]	👑 Adopted [John 1:12]
👑 Secure [Ro. 8:38-39]	👑 Free [Ro. 6:5-6]
👑 Unfinished [Phil. 1:6]	👑 In Christ [1 Cor. 15:22]