

**HOLY MANY IN UNHOLY SOCIETY:**  
**A study in I and II Corinthians**  
AMEN Bible Study 2013-2014

**2 Corinthians 12:1-21**  
**May 15, 2014**

**:1 I. The Christian must be careful to boast.**

*"I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations."*

cf. 1 Corinthians 1:29; 3:21; Romans 3:21-26; Galatians 6:13; Philippians 3: 4-11

Three important ingredients to boasting:

- A. What is said.
- B. The reason.
- C. The basis.

**:2-10 II. The Christian chooses weakness over self-glory and self-sufficiency.**

*"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that his man was caught up into paradise- whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows- and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weakness. Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

cf Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7; 2 Corinthians 1:8; 4:6b-7; Luke 13:12; John 5:1-16; 11:4

**:2-6 A. The Christian gives God glory and not self.**

- : 4-6 1. There is a holy shyness in the spiritual experiences of a Christians.**
- :2 2. The only prerequisite for having access to Christ is being in Christ.**

**: 7-10 B. Strength and weakness are inseparable in the Christian walk.**

- 1. Weakness leads to strength  
= Our growth in power.  
Strength leads to weakness
- 2. In each thorn there is a message from Satan and a message from Christ.
- 3. The purpose of our weakness is for us to realize grace is sufficient for us and to glorify Christ.
- 4. The Christian response to suffering is glad acceptance and boasting.

**:11-21 III. The underlying purpose of Paul's message is not self defense but for the Corinthians to identify with and imitate Paul.**

*"I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was no at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong! Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours*

*but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? I urged Titus to go, and send the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps? Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may not find me not as you wish- that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.”*

cf. Philippians 2:1-11; 2 Corinthians 5:9-10; 1 Corinthians 4:17

The pattern we are to follow:

- :14-15    A. To have a passionate love for one another.
1. The Christian does not consume his brother as an object to an end.
  2. The Christian love we are to have for one another is sacrificial.
- :16-18    B. To be of the same mind. (There is no such thing as a snowflake Christian).
1. There is no deviation from the mind of Christ for the Christian.
  2. We see the mind of Christ in the pattern of Christ.
  3. The aim of Christ and therefore the Christian is to please God.
- :19-21    C. To live as a new creation.
1. The Christian repents and puts away the old.
  2. The Christian embraces the new and pursues Christ.