

# “2 Corinthians 11:20 —Part 5”

This article is from the “Among Friends” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of Dec. 30, 2023.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I concluded a five-part series about 2 Corinthians 11:20. Since the apostle Paul mentioned five negative characteristics practiced by religious leaders and disciples, each study discussed one of the ideas that he mentioned.

## **Followers were more wrong**

It is interesting to read the context leading up to 2 Corinthians 11:20.

- 2 Corinthians 11:13-15—The discussion is about false apostles who are described as deceitful workers.
- 2 Corinthians 11:20-21—But, while Paul is describing the wrong behavior of the fake apostles, he was directly discussing the wrong behavior of the followers.
- Shame on false religious teachers for promoting themselves and their erroneous ideas.
- But shame on followers for accepting the wrong behavior of the alleged religious leaders.

## **Allowing people to hit you in the face**

Notice the fifth of the five characteristics mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:20.

- Corinthians 11:20 (New King James) “For you put up with it . . . if one strikes you on the face.”

2 Corinthians 11:20 (The Amplified New Testament)—“For you endure it . . . if a man strikes you in the face.”

## **Hitting versus defending and protecting**

The rest of this article will be about five concepts that show the contrast between hitting people versus defending and protecting people.

Instead of following people who exalt themselves over people, we should be encouraging people who defend and protect.

### **Do not follow leaders who hurt you**

Notice an example of a person (Saul) who hurt people—while thinking he was doing a service for God.

- Acts 7:58—When the crowd stoned Stephen, the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of Saul.
- Acts 8:1-3—Saul was consenting to the death of Stephen, but he also wreaked other havoc on the church—entering the homes of men and women to drag them into prison.
- Acts 9:1-2—Saul was noted for breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord.

I repeat—do not follow leaders who hurt you.

### **Do not be a leader who hurts people**

In 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Paul listed some characteristics for church leaders (servants as the Son of God mentioned in Matthew 20:25-28). Notice some wording in verse 3 from four different translations.

- King James—“no striker . . . not a brawler.”
- New King James—“not violent . . . not quarrelsome.”
- Revised Standard—“not violent . . . not quarrelsome.”
- Amplified New Testament—“not combative . . . not quarrelsome.”

I repeat—do not be a leader who hurts people.

### **Son of God knew when to stand up for Himself**

- John 2:14-16—The Son of God showed strong action during this episode in the temple.
- John 8:41, 44—When the crowd hurled insults at the Son of God (“we were not born of fornication”), He answered back (saying the devil was their father.)
- Mark 13:9—The Son of God warned the disciples that they would be beaten.

n Mark 14:65—The Son of God was taken before the high priest (religious leader) and they spit on Him, blindfolded Him to beat Him and mocked Him.

### **Paul knew when to stand up for himself**

It is interesting to note that, shortly after Paul wrote to avoid being hit (2 Corinthians 11:20), he acknowledged that he had been hit (2 Corinthians 11:23-25).

What can we learn from that?

Just as the Son of God knew when to stand up for Himself, Paul was encouraging that same message to his friends. Let's notice two examples where Paul stood up for himself.

Here is the first example.

After Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison (Acts 16:22-23), Paul used his Roman citizenship to be treated with respect.

- Acts 16:36—The keeper of the prison informed Paul that he was free to go.
- Acts 16:37—Paul replied: They have beaten innocent Romans citizens openly, and now they want to release us in secret? No, indeed. Let them come personally and release us.
- Acts 16:38—The magistrates were afraid when they heard that Paul was a Roman citizen.
- Acts 16:39—The magistrates went and pleaded with them, and asked them to leave the city.

Here is the second example.

After a commander threatened to examine Paul under scourging, Paul used his Roman citizenship to avoid the beating.

- Acts 22:24—A commander ordered Paul to be examined under scourging.
- Acts 22:25—Paul asked a centurion if it was lawful to scourge an innocent Roman citizen.
- Acts 22:26—The centurion told the commander to be careful, because Paul was a Roman citizen.
- Acts 22:27—The commander went to Paul and asked him if he was indeed a Roman citizen—and Paul answered that he was.
- Acts 22:28—When the commander said that he had paid a large amount of money to obtain his citizenship, Paul said that was a born citizen.
- Acts 22:29—Those who were about to examine Paul withdrew from him, and the commander was afraid because he had bound a Roman citizen.

Now, let's look at an example where Paul allowed himself to be hit in the face.

- Acts 23:1-2—When Paul made a comment to the council, the high priest commanded people to strike Paul on the mouth.
- Acts 23:3-4—When Paul made a critical response, those who stood near asked: "Do you revile God's high priest?"
- Acts 23:5—Paul regretted making the remark (quoting Exodus 22:28).

## Teaching people to defend and protect

- Acts 9:23-25—Here is a wonderful example of the disciples hiding Saul (in a basket) from the Jews who were plotting to kill him.
- Joshua 2:1-6—Here is a wonderful example of Rahab hiding people from the king of Jericho. (Her wonderful behavior was mentioned in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25.)
- Acts 9:26-28—When people had not yet learned to trust Saul, Barnabas took him to the apostles in Jerusalem to vouch for his changed behavior.
- Acts 16:40—After Paul and Silas had their traumatic experience, Lydia temporarily received them in her home to encourage them.
- Romans 16:1-2—Phoebe was a noted servant among the congregations who helped Paul and many other disciples.