

“2 Corinthians 11:20 —Part 1”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I began 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 will discuss 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.

Taken into bondage

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

2 Corinthians 11:20 (New King James)—“For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage . . .”

2 Corinthians 11:20 (The Amplified New Testament)—“For you endure it if a man assumes control of your souls and makes slaves of you . . .”

Bondage versus freedom

The rest of this article will be about four concepts that show the contrast of bondage versus freedom.

Instead of following people into bondage, we should be helping people to find freedom.

Understand two types of bondage

Let me show you two scriptures about two types of bondage.

- Bondage caused by following needless expectations.

The first example of bondage is caused by doing needless expectations (doing things that our Heavenly Father doesn't require)—instead of accepting the Father's grace.

- Galatians 2:4—False brethren among the Body of Christ secretly taught needless expectations (like circumcision)—ideas that work against the Father's tremendous grace.

- Bondage caused by ignoring God's true expectations.

The second example of bondage is going against God's expectations and thereby falling into sinful behavior with unpleasant consequences—because people misapply the Father's tremendous grace.

- Jude 4—Ungodly people crept in unnoticed among the Body of Christ to turn the grace of God into lewdness—ideas that influenced people to ignore the Father's expectations.

The Body of Christ is definitely saved by the grace of the Heavenly Father. He is our Father who has family rules for His children.

Do not follow religious people into bondage

Many people who claim to be religious leaders are not from God.

- Matthew 16:21—The elders, chief priests and scribes were instrumental in tormenting and in killing the Son of God.

- Matthew 20:25—Most alleged leaders follow the leadership style of the world—seeking to lord it over people and to exercise great authority over people.

- Matthew 23:4—Many alleged religious leaders have a double standard—putting burdens on people that they themselves ignore.

- Matthew 23:7-10—Many alleged religious leaders enjoy the position of authority.

- Acts 4:16-17—In the book of Acts, the council wanted to know what to do with the disciples.

- Acts 4:18—The council commanded that the disciples quit preaching.

- Acts 4:19-20—Peter and John explained that they were going to do the right thing in the sight of God rather than to listen to the council.

- Acts 4:21—The council further threatened the disciples.

- Acts 5:17-25—When the high priest (a man with a high religious rank and title) threw the disciples into prison, an angel opened the prison doors, and the disciples went to the temple to teach.
- Acts 5:27-28—When some officers brought the disciples back before the council, the high priest asked: “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!”
- Acts 5:29—The apostles answered: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”
- Acts 5:33-39—When the furious council plotted to kill them, Gamaliel convinced them not to proceed with that idea.
- Acts 5:40—So the council merely beat them and released them.

I repeat—Do not follow religious people into bondage.

Do not lead people into bondage

But there is more to the story than just avoiding the mistakes of following religious people into bondage. We need to avoid leading people into bondage—whether it is deliberate or accidental.

Notice how Paul and Barnabas rejected the idea of being overlords to the people.

- Acts 14:8-10—At the speaking of Paul, a crippled man was healed.
- Acts 14:11-12—The people were amazed—calling Barnabas Zeus and calling Paul Hermes (because Paul was the main speaker).
- Acts 14:13—The priest of Zeus brought animals with the intention of sacrificing them to Barnabas and Paul.
- Acts 14:14-15—Barnabas and Paul tore off their clothes and stopped the idolatry.

I repeat—Do not lead people into bondage.

Lead people toward freedom

Disciples of the Father and the Son will lead people toward freedom by their lifestyle of service.

- Matthew 20:26—The Son of God taught that the rulership style of the world (lording it over people and exercising great authority) should not be done among His disciples. He said: “Whoever desires to be great among you, let him be your servant.”
- Matthew 20:27-28—He continued: “Whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”