

“2 Corinthians 11:20 —Part 2”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with 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.

Allowing people to devour you

Notice the second 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 devours you.”

2 Corinthians 11:20 (The Amplified New Testament)—“For you endure it . . . if a man devours you and preys upon you.”

Devouring versus edifying

The rest of this article will be about four concepts that show the contrast between devouring versus edifying.

Instead of following people into being devoured, we should be helping people to grow toward maturity and edification.

Allowed Himself to be devoured

We need to remember that the Son of God allowed Himself to be devoured. So shouldn't we just allow ourselves to be devoured?

It is important to see the difference between being devoured when it is the will of the Father and being devoured because we are weak and foolish. Notice that the Son of God allowed Himself to be devoured—when the timing was according to the will of the Father.

- John 2:18-21—The Son of God told the Jewish crowd that after His body (which He figuratively described as a temple) was going to be destroyed, it would be raised up in three days.
- John 10:17-18—The Son of God told the Jewish crowd that He had chosen to lay down His life.
- John 19:11—The Son of God told Pilate that he had no power to deal with Him, unless it had been given to him from above.

Do not follow religious people who devour people

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

- John 16:2—The Son of God reminded his disciples that some people who claim to be religious leaders will do harmful behavior while thinking that they are pleasing the Father.
- Acts 20:28—While people may help in overseeing disciples, members of the Church of God were purchased by the blood of the Son of God.
- Acts 20:31—Paul warned the disciples with tears, because he demonstrated his care for the people.
- Acts 20:32—Paul commended the people to God and to the word of His grace—which is able to build up.
- 1 Timothy 5:20—Understand that there may be times when leaders need to rebuke in the presence of a group.
- 2 Corinthians 10:1-2—But leaders should generally seek to start with meekness and gentleness before progressing to boldness. (Some exceptions would include schoolteachers who begin with firm rules and soften as they can.)
- Galatians 6:1—The best way to help people is to restore in a spirit of meekness.

I repeat—do not follow religious people who devour people.

Do not feel trapped by religious people who devour

The Son of Man set an example of not allowing the devil to manipulate Him into following the devil.

- Matthew 4:3—The devil attempted to manipulate the Son of God when he said: “If You are the Son of God . . .”
- Matthew 4:4—The Son of God did not take the bait of letting the devil to establish the narrative and to control the terms.
- Matthew 4:5-6—The devil attempted to manipulate the Son of God when he said: “If You are the Son of God . . .”
- Matthew 4:7—The Son of God did not take the bait of letting the devil establish the narrative and control the terms.
- Matthew 4:8-9—The devil attempted to manipulate the Son of God by appealing to His kind nature.
- Matthew 4:10—The Son of God did not waver from His commitment to the Father and to the Father’s plan.
- 1 Samuel 26:21-24—When Saul confessed his sin against David and asked David to return, David basically said “no thank you”—because David did not allow Saul’s behavior (even Saul’s apology) to control David’s life.
- John 8:59—The Son of God hid Himself—meaning He didn’t let the crowd devour Him at that moment.
- John 10:39-40—The Son of God escaped out of their hand—meaning He didn’t let the crowd devour Him at that moment.
- John 12:36—The Son of God was hidden from them—meaning He didn’t let the crowd devour Him at that moment.
- John 13:27—The Son of God identified Judas—because it was time.
- John 18:11—The Son of God allowed the soldiers to take Him—because it was time.
- John 19:32-37—A soldier pierced the side of the Son of God—because it was time.

I repeat—Do not feel trapped by religious people who seek to devour you.

Lead people toward maturity and edification

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

- Ephesians 4:11-12—People use these verses to create a hierarchical system of control—but the context is actually encouraging servants (Matthew 20:25-28) to equip disciples to edify other people.
- Ephesians 4:13-16—Servants (not tyrants) help people to mature and to learn how to edify other people.
- Romans 12:6-8—Notice seven gifts: prophesy, ministry (service), teaching, exhorting, giving, leading and showing mercy (with cheerfulness).
- 1 Corinthians 3:14—If you help people build on the foundation of the Son of God, you will receive a reward.
- 1 Corinthians 3:15—If you thwart the growth of people (bondage, devouring and other traits), you will still be personally saved—but you will need to learn lessons through the Father’s correction.

Please focus upon helping people to mature and to be edified.