

“2 Corinthians 11:20 —Part 3”

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. 16, 2023.

By Dave Havir

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 was 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 take from you

Notice the third 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 takes from you.”

2 Corinthians 11:20 (The Amplified New Testament)—“For you endure it . . . if a man deceives you and takes advantage of you.”

Taking versus giving

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

Instead of following people who are preoccupied with money, we should be encouraging people to be effective givers.

Do not follow greedy leaders

Notice a few verses about warning people to avoid following greedy leaders.

- Romans 16:17-18—Avoid religious people who cause division and offense because they serve their “own belly”—allowing their emphasis upon money to affect their opportunity to serve.
- 1 Timothy 6:3-5—Withdraw from religious people who think that religion is supposed to make them rich.
- 1 Timothy 6:6-10—The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.

I repeat—do not follow greedy leaders.

Do not become a greedy leader

Notice a few verses about warning people to avoid becoming a greedy leader.

- 2 Peter 2:1-3—The apostle Peter warned disciples about false teachers who exploited people because of their covetousness.
- John 10:12-13—The Son of God warned disciples about hirelings who do not care about the sheep.

It is fair to ask: “What is a hireling?”

Merriam-Webster gives the following definition: “A person who serves for hire, especially for purely mercenary motives.”

Dictionary.com gives the following three definitions: “A person who works only for pay, especially in a menial or boring job, with little or no concern for the value of the work”; “serving for pay only”; and “venal, mercenary.”

I repeat—do not become a greedy leader.

Notice writings from Paul

- Acts 20:33-35—Paul wasn’t serving for the money (or power).
- 1 Timothy 5:18—Paul mentioned that a laborer is worthy of his wages.

It is interesting that Paul accepted money from some congregations, but not from other congregations.

- 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12—Paul mentioned that, if a religious servant will not work, neither should he eat.
- Acts 18:3—Paul earned some money as a tentmaker.
- 1 Corinthians 4:12—Paul mentioned that he spent time working with his hands.

- 1 Corinthians 9:1-18—Paul mentioned that he (as a religious servant to the congregation in Corinth) had the right to receive financial remuneration from it.
- 2 Corinthians 11:7-9—Paul somewhat apologized to the congregation in Corinth for not taking money from it—when he took money from brethren in Macedonia.
- 2 Corinthians 12:13-18—Paul apologized to the congregation in Corinth (“forgive me this wrong”) for not taking money from it.
- Philippians 4:15-18—Paul mentioned: “When I departed Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only.”

Teaching people to give

- Mark 12:42-43—Rich people are givers, but widows often give a higher percentage of their livelihood.
- 1 Timothy 5:4-8—Families are instructed to take care of their widows—and widows need to be humbly cooperating with the guidance of their family.
- Galatians 6:9-10—Disciples should do good unto all, especially to the household of faith.
- 2 Corinthians 9:6-7—Disciples should not be giving grudgingly—because God loves a cheerful giver.