Anchored to Stand

**STUDIES IN SECOND CORINTHIANS**

**Lesson 14**

**II Corinthians 11:1-15**

***Stand as a Pure Bride***

***…For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ***

**II Corinthians 11:2**

Even from the first phrase of II Corinthians chapter 11 we can sense Paul’s intense concern as a spiritual shepherd. He was the one that founded the church and was a spiritual father to them. In Paul’s day, it was the responsibility of the father to ensure that his daughter was a virgin on her wedding day. Thus, as a spiritual father to the church at Corinth, it was Paul’s responsibility to make sure they retained their purity, that they weren’t seduced by those who sought to lure them away from the simplicity of the gospel. Our study this week, through verses 1-15 will give us a better understanding of a pastor’s zeal to protect his congregation from cunning and deceitful men. Because believers today are continually being exposed to false teachers and doctrine, these verses are as important now as they were to Christians living in the First Century.

**First Day Overview: Read II Corinthians 11:1-15**

1. Read the following paragraphs and write one or two phrases that especially stand out to you. Be sure to underline or highlight these verses in your Bible, too.
	1. II Corinthians 11:1-6

* 1. II Corinthians 11:7-12
	2. II Corinthians 11:13-15
	3. In this week’s portion of scripture we are able to see a different side, a protective side of Paul. What do you notice?
1. Paul was not just an evangelist and Bible teacher, he considered himself to be a spiritual father to the believers in Corinth.
	1. Read I Corinthians 4:15 and record Paul’s words to the Corinthians.
	2. Is there anyone who you would consider to be your spiritual father or mother in the faith?
	3. Are you protective over another believer, acting as a spiritual mother to them? If so, briefly share how you can relate to Paul.
2. Does it surprise you to know that God is jealous?
	1. Read Exodus 20:1-5 and Exodus 34:14. What is the context of God’s jealousy?
	2. How does it make you feel to know that God is jealous for you?

**Anchored In –** He loves us, O how He loves us! Take some time to ponder the simple message of the Gospel; Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Journal your thoughts:

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***He is jealous for me,***

***Loves like a hurricane, I am a tree***

***Bending beneath the weight of His wind and mercy***

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**Second Day: Read II Corinthians 11:1-2**

1. Paul seems to exhibit that he is uncomfortable with the way he has been forced to defend himself.
	1. What is his request to the Corinthian believers? (verse 1)
	2. Can you relate to this request of Paul?
2. Although he viewed *boasting* as *foolishness*, he reluctantly continued with his defense. He felt compelled to warn the believers about false teachers. In II Corinthians 11:2-3 Paul gave two compelling motivations for this.
	1. How does he describe his care for them in verse 2?
	2. We don’t really hear the phrase *chaste virgin* in our culture today. Look up the word chaste in a dictionary and write the definition here:
	3. In addition, we don’t use the word *betrothed* anymore; we usually use the word engaged. Paul is saying that we, as Christians, are engaged to Jesus. Do you see yourself this way? Why or why not?
3. *Of all the things that have brought misery upon the human life it is jealousy. There is nothing that has done so much harm in homes, in personal and national relationships, in international situations, in church life, as the ugly, devilish poison of jealousy … this is surely the very thing that has wrecked human living, that has broken marriages and wrecked homes, and this ugly business has smashed its way into churches. 'I will have no other friends nor will I allow other friends to come into your life, but me,' says one to another … To put it another way, the jealousy of man is selfish and self-centered. It usurps the rights of others, it is blind to their happiness, and it involves their ruin by leading to tyranny, and it cares nothing for anybody else.* – Alan Redpath
	1. Human jealousy is a vice, but to share godly jealousy is a virtue. God’s jealousy is love in action. Why is God’s jealousy different than human jealousy?
	2. There is a place for a spiritual father’s passionate concern for the exclusive and pure devotion to Christ of his spiritual children. *Godly jealousy* rises over deep concern for the spiritual welfare of others. Cite an example of when you felt this kind of jealousy over another.
4. Paul explains his *godly jealousy* by using the beautiful picture of the Church as the *Bride of Christ.* It is important to remember that engagement, or betrothal, wasn't taken lightly in Paul's culture. If someone was unfaithful during the engagement period, it was considered adultery, and an engagement could only be broken by divorce
	1. List a few character qualities of a chaste (pure) bride.
	2. Anytime we give our hearts to something other than God, we are committing "spiritual adultery" during the period of our engagement. How should knowing you are the Bride of Christ affect the way you live?

**Anchored In** – Human jealousy is ugly and will keep us from the happiness and joyful living that God intends for us. Let’s confess any areas of jealousy to the Lord and allow Him to cleanse us and make us pure today.

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***And I will betroth thee unto Me forever;***

***Yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness,***

***And in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies.***

***I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness:***

***And thou shalt know the LORD.***

***Hosea 2:19-20***

**THIRD DAY: Read 2 Corinthians 11:3-6**

In Paul’s day, the ability to speak in an eloquent and polished manner was popular. This is what Paul meant when he said he is *untrained in speech*. He also used sarcasm when he referred to the other teachers as “eminent” because he knew they were false. Although Paul considers himself the “chief of sinners” (I Timothy 1:15) he does not consider himself to be inferior to these false teachers.

1. Consider Paul’s motivation for warning these Christians from II Corinthians 11:3 NLT: *But I fear that somehow you will be led away from your pure and simple devotion to Christ, just as Eve was deceived by the serpent*. This verse not only exposes the subtlety and influence of the false teachers, but also reveals the destructive results that occur because of their deception.
	1. Read Genesis 3:1-5. Describe in your own words, the serpent’s (Satan) clever manipulation of Eve’s mind.
	2. Paul was concerned that these false teachers would lead the Corinthians away from the simplicity of the gospel. What kinds of things prevent people from keeping their devotion to Christ pure and simple?
2. Read II Corinthians 11:4-6. In verse 4 we find one of Paul’s reasons for continuing to indulge in a little folly (verse 1) as he defended his apostleship and ministry.
	1. What troubled Paul about the Corinthian believers? Use other versions of verse 4 to help you with your answer.
	2. Instead of being gullible and accepting of false teachers, what instruction does Romans 16:17 give Christians?
	3. Do you know of any present-day examples of those teaching *another Jesus*, a *different spirit* and a *different gospel*?
	4. Read Paul’s warning in Galatians 1:6-9. How serious is it when someone preaches *another Jesus?*
3. Most expositors think II Corinthians 11:5 was sarcasm about the deceitful workers in Corinth who claimed to be the most eminent or “super-apostles”. Read II Corinthians 11:6 to see how Paul countered their accusations.
	1. What did Paul say in verse 6?
	2. Paul describes himself as *untrained in speech, but not in knowledge*. A story is told about a dinner party where the guests were expected to stand after the meal and recite something for the group. Asked to quote Psalm 23, a famous Shakespearean actor articulated each and every phrase perfectly. Then the host of the party asked his pastor, who was also in attendance, to quote the same Psalm. The pastor lacked the rhythmic cadence, the powerful voice, and the smooth speech. All he had was a tear rolling down his cheek. *I know the Psalm*, said the actor, *but this man knows the Shepherd.* What is your response to this story?
	3. Paul was concerned that the Corinthian believers would maintain the simplicity of their faith. What insight does I Corinthians 2:1-5 give on this subject?
	4. Paul was not persuasive in his speech and was not the best public speaker, yet he would not allow that to hinder his ministry. How does this encourage you to talk to people about Jesus more often?

**Anchored In –** Aren’t you glad Paul said that the gospel is supposed to be simple? Write out the gospel message in the simplest way possible. Then, take a few moments to praise and thank the Lord for the simplicity of His love, grace and mercy.

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*Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so…*

**Fourth Day – Read II Corinthians 11:7-12**

Paul did not ask for anything in return for preaching the gospel to the Corinthians, whereas these false teachers demanded large fees. These “super apostles” were exceedingly wealthy from the exorbitant speaking fees they charged. Paul, on the other hand, charged nothing. A loving father does not lay burdens on his children. Instead, he sacrifices so that the children might have what they need.

1. The fact that Paul was not paid for his speaking caused his accusers to assume that he had nothing worthwhile to say. Read II Corinthians 11:7-9
	1. Notice the sarcasm in Paul’s response as you record a few of Paul’s phrases.
	2. In verse 8 the expression *I robbed other churches* meant that while Paul was serving the Corinthian church he received financial support from other churches. Paul kept himself from being *burdensome* (verse 9) in every way possible. What did Paul do when he was in Thessalonica to avoid being a burden? Use I Thessalonians 2:9 and II Thessalonians 3:8 for your answer.
	3. Why is it important that the gospel message be free of charge?
2. Read II Corinthians 11:10-12. Paul’s refusal to minister for money made his accusers look bad. In spite of their criticism, Paul said he would never stop boasting about preaching the Gospel without charge. What reasons does he give in the following verses?
	1. Verse 11:
	2. Verse 12:
3. Paul didn't have all the polish and panache of a great speaker; but he knew God, and thus preached the gospel with power. It has been said: *If the false teachers wanted to engage in a boasting match with Paul, let them follow his policy.* *But he knew they would never be able to boast of serving without monetary reward.*
	1. What does this reveal about the motive of the false teachers?
	2. It is easy to take the position of teacher lightly in the church, without considering its cost in terms of accountability. What does James 3:1 tell us about Bible teachers?
	3. According to I Corinthians 9:18 what was Paul’s attitude concerning preaching the Gospel?
4. There are many sincerely devoted Christians who have been deceived by a false gospel message.
	1. Have you personally had an experience with a false teacher? Briefly share it here:
	2. Federal agents don’t learn to spot counterfeit money by studying the counterfeits. They study genuine bills until they master the look of the real thing. Then when they see the bogus money they recognize it. How are we able to tell the difference between the false gospel and the true gospel? Answer from *Acts 17:11*
	3. We can be sure that God will deal with these false teachers. They are not just stealing money from God’s people, they are stealing money from God Himself! Read Matthew 7:14-23 and record what Jesus said about false prophets.

**Anchored In** – We are in desperate need of discernment! There are so many false and weird versions of Jesus out there today; we need to be able to spot the truth. Finish your study today in prayer. Ask the Lord to increase your discernment and wisdom, knowledge and spiritual understanding.

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***Then you shall discern between the righteous and the wicked,***

***Between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve Him***

**Malachi 3:18**

**Fifth Day – Read II Corinthians 11:13-15**

1. In II Corinthians 11:13-15 Paul went on the offense against the false teachers*.*
	1. How did he describe them? (verse 13)
	2. The Greek word translated *transforming* and *transformed* in these verses means disguise or masquerade. Why do you think these men transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ?
	3. Why shouldn’t Christians marvel or be surprised that these deceitful workers do this? (verse 14)
	4. In what ways does Satan *transform himself into an angel of light?*
2. According to II Corinthians 11:15 Satan’s *ministers* can transform themselves into ministers of righteousness.
	1. Did you even realize that Satan had *ministers*? Look up the word *minister* and write what you see:
	2. Share a practical way they might operate among believers today.
	3. The wonder is not that they can transform themselves as ministers of righteousness, but rather that we don’t recognize them. What criteria do you use to recognize a true minister of Christ and a deceitful worker?
3. How should the following verses alert us to the dangers of those who would deceive us:
	1. Matthew 7:15
	2. Mark 13:21-22
	3. Link the last phrase of II Corinthians 11:15 with Philippians 3:19a. What do you see?
4. Read Jude 1:17-21 to receive some crucial instructions that will keep believers from being ensnared by deceivers
	1. What are the two things we are told to do *yourselves*? (verse 20 & 21)
	2. Read Hebrews 10:24. What are some practical ways we can carry out these crucial instructions?

**Anchored in** – It is important for us to build one another up. Ask the Lord to show you someone that you might build up this week. Begin by using Jude 1:24 as a model to pray for them, that God would keep them from stumbling and present them faultless when they stand in *the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

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**To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, be glory and majesty,**

 **Dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.**

**Jude 1:25**

**Sixth Day- STAND as the Bride of Christ**

We just love weddings, don’t we? Everything about them is just delightful; the cake, the flowers, the celebration. Perhaps the most wonderful moment of the entire wedding is the moment the doors open and the Bride is revealed. It’s so fun to observe the look of awe that sweeps over the groom’s face as his beautiful bride is revealed. Today, it will be our pleasure to look at some different aspects of a wedding to help us understand our relationship to Jesus, the bridegroom. We don’t want to be unfaithful to Him by joining ourselves with the ways of this world; we want to stand in purity as the Bride of Christ.

1. As a believer you are the Bride of Christ. Read Isaiah 62:5b and share your response to this:
2. In our wedding ceremonies, the “big moment” is the revealing of the bride. At the marriage supper of the Lamb, it will be reversed. All attention will be on the revelation of Jesus Christ. Read Revelation 19:11-14 and write down its description of Jesus.
3. At the beginning of the 20th century, white became synonymous with purity. In August of 1849, Godey’s Lady’s Book, which was one of the most popular and influential magazines in the United States at the time, declared: *Custom has decided, from the earliest ages, that white is the most fitting hue, whatever may be the material. It is an emblem of the purity and innocence of girlhood, and the unsullied heart she now yields to the chosen one*.
	1. We want to be considered innocent and pure when Jesus returns for His bride. When the church is presented to Jesus, our attire will be similar. What do you see in Revelation 19:9-8?
	2. What is the righteousness of the saints? See Romans 8:4 and Isaiah 1:18,
	3. We are considered the Bride of Christ. When we flirt with the world and allow ourselves to be given over to its ideals and pleasures it is as if we are being unfaithful to God. What are some ways Christians can be unfaithful to God?
4. In the Eastern culture of Paul’s day, wedding festivities lasted for an entire week. Could you imagine the amount of planning that had to take place? Weddings were different than our weddings because the guests didn’t know when the bridal party would appear. The bride would stay home and wait, with great anticipation, for the bridegroom to come for her. After the bridegroom would come to get his bride and they would walk together to the site of the wedding, taking the longest possible route through the town. There would be various groups of people waiting at different corners to join the wedding party as they went toward the wedding. Read Matthew 25:1-13

* 1. Write down some of the things you observed:
	2. Notice that there is a division among these ten. They fall into two groups: five were wise, and five were foolish. What makes the difference between the two?
	3. What does the lamp represent? Read Proverbs 20:27 what does *lamp of the Lord* represent?
	4. We need oil so our lamps don’t burn out. The oil quite typically represents the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures tell of the *oil of gladness* and the *oil of anointing* of God's Presence. When is the last time you had an “oil check”? How can we be sure our lamps don’t run out of oil?

**Anchored In –** We don’t want to miss the Bridegroom when He returns for us. Let’s make sure we are ready, with oil in our lamps so we can stand as a pure bride. Ask the Lord to show you any impurities in your life and ask Him to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit. Maranatha! (Lord come quickly).

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