

While Paul expressed his dissatisfaction with boasting in his previous remarks throughout chapters 10 and into 11, he now employs a strategy with his rhetoric, arguing his points through boasting, but knowingly rather than foolishly. Paul's boasting, as we will see, is in his weakness, and therefore in God's strength, unlike that of the "super apostles" who are deceiving the Corinthians to follow a false Gospel.

2 Corinthians

11:16–33

Boasting in Weakness

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Bragging and boasting are not exactly traits we want to be known for. They're equated with arrogance and pride. However, there are times when our boasting can be in those things that appropriately reflect the work of God in our lives and the way He has demonstrated Himself faithful to His promises and what He will do in (and through) us.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

WHAT things in your life do you consider yourself to be most proud of?

HOW is God responsible for the things in your life you are most likely to be proud of and boast about?

WHAT are some ways God has prevented pride from creeping into your heart when it comes to things you have achieved or accomplished?

WHAT are some ways our shortcomings and/or weakness actually create opportunities for us to boast about God and His work in us?

2 Corinthians

11:16-33

Boasting in Weakness

Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

OBSERVATION

What does Paul choose to repeat in vs. 16?

How does Paul say he is speaking (and not speaking) in vs. 17-18?

In vs. 21, what does Paul remind his readers that he is speaking like?

What does Paul boast about in vs. 22? What about in vs. 23-27?

Where is Paul's concern in vs. 28-29?

According to vs. 30, what does Paul say he must boast about, if he chooses to boast?

What event does Paul reference in vs. 32-33?

INTERPRETATION

Where has Paul previously made the case for his "foolishness" as a strategy to make his point? Consider 11:1, 12-13. Why is this particular strategy foolish?

What does it mean to boast in the flesh (vs. 18) and how does Paul use sarcasm to make his point in vs. 19-21?

What seems to be the "category" of Paul's boasting in vs. 22? Why is it foolish to boast of these things? Consider Matthew 3:9.

How might you "categorize" the things Paul boasts of in vs. 23-28? In boasting of these things, why does Paul say he is talking like a madman (vs. 23)?

Why does vs. 30 serve as a fitting summary sentence for this section?

Paul references a specific event in vs. 32. Why is this a fitting image for the point Paul is attempting to make regarding "strength in weakness"? Consider Acts 9:1-25 for insight.

APPLICATION

Where in your life do you consider yourself weak? What character trait, attitude, or heart issue are you struggling to overcome, and what would it look like to depend on the Lord's strength in that particular area, so that in your weakness He might make you strong?