

2 Corinthians concludes with some final warnings from Paul. His strongest admonishment is one of self evaluation for the church in Corinth, exhorting them to test themselves in order to make sure they are in the faith.

2 Corinthians

13:1-14

Paul's Final

Defense

I. COMPARING OUR STORIES

MY EXPERIENCE...

YOUR EXPERIENCE...

Authority can be a nasty word to some. We generally dislike authority, or at least are compelled to question it. For others, being *in* authority can be a difficult and stressful task. All of us, in some form or another, are called to exercise some kind of authority AND we are called to respond in obedience to others who are in authority over us. Regardless of the role, we need God's Spirit to direct us in a Biblical manner so that we can honor the role (and responsibility) of authority in our lives.

II. CONSIDERING OUR STRUGGLES

HOW would you describe your attitude toward authority in general?

WHAT are some of the roles you've had to serve in that called you to exercise authority of some kind?

HOW have you handled executing authority in a healthy way? **HOW** have you not?

IS it more difficult for you to serve in a role of authority *or* to respond to authority in a Godly manner?

2 Corinthians

Read 2 Corinthians 13:1-14

13:1-14

Paul's Final Defense

OBSERVATION

According to vs. 1, how many times has Paul come to Corinth?

What does Paul remind his audience of in vs. 1?

What warning does Paul issue in vs. 2, and what reason does he offer in vs. 3?

To whom does Paul compare his actions in vs. 3-5 and how?

In vs. 5, what does Paul tell those in Corinth to do?

What does Paul hope for in vs. 6?

According to vs. 9, what is Paul praying for?

For what reason does Paul write these things (vs. 10)?

INTERPRETATION

Why does Paul remind those in Corinth that they must have the evidence of two witnesses in vs. 1? Consider Deuteronomy 19:5 and 1 Timothy 5:19.

How does the desire of the Corinthians in vs. 3 fuel Paul's attitude and tone in this final section?

Where, and for what purpose, have we seen Paul use the contrast of strength and weakness before in this letter to the Corinthians? Consider 2 Corinthians 8:9, 11:29-30, 12:10, and Philippians 2:7-8.

What does Paul mean in vs. 5? What does it look like to "examine" and "test" ourselves?

How might Paul's use of authority, in order to bring restoration to the Corinthians, become severe (vs. 10)? Consider the process outlined in Matthew 18:15-20 for insight.

How does Paul's authority in this situation work to "build up" and not "tear down" (vs. 10)?

What does it mean to "aim for restoration" in vs. 11? How is this different than the command we're given in Ephesians 4:32?

APPLICATION

How well do you steward the responsibilities of authority given to you?

How well do you respond to the authorities God has placed over you?