

2 Corinthians 10:7-18 The Measure that Matters!

What if you went to work one morning and found that other pp were there taking credit for a job you recently completed

You found that they had been promoted and you were demoted

Or what if you came home one afternoon and discovered that there was an imposter in your place at home. **They were wearing your clothes – sitting in your chair – holding your remote**

Everyone in the house was giving you the cold shoulder

Well that is sort of like what was happening to the Apostle Paul –

A) Somewhere between his 2nd and 3rd missionary journey false teachers had entered the city of Corinth and had turned the hearts of the pp against Paul

B) Launched a campaign seeking to undermine Paul's ministry and to steal the flock in Corinth.

C) These false teachers had said a lot of things about Paul – that we have talked about at length in Past studies –

1) But if I were to summarize those things – You could put it this way: **Paul didn't measure up!**

How do you measure up? Work – Employee or an Employer

A) How measure up at home? Roommate – Husband ? Wife ? Parent

B) How do you measure up at Church – Ministry role

C) When we talk about measuring up what should the measure be?

Well back in 1 Corinthians 4 Paul reveals something that I think is very relevant to our discussion today!

3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court.
{Paul was not a pp Pleaser

In fact, I do not even judge myself. { Nor was Paul a Self pleaser

4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

Paul was not concerned with Pleasing people.

Paul was also not concerned about pleasing himself.

**The thing that Paul was most interested in was
pleasing the Lord**

A) That gives us a rough outline for our study this morning that I have entitled – The measure that Matters!

B) We are going to see three things concerning What Matters

**#1 It is not what People think of us that
matters V. 7-11**

#2 It is not even what we think of ourselves that matters – V. 12-16

#3 But Ultimately what matters is what the Lord thinks of us. V. 17-18

What Matters #1 It is not what pp think about us that matters Rd v7-11

7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's. 8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed — 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10 "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

A) Now I said that the measure that matters is not what pp think about us.

B) When the pp thought about Paul there are a number of things they were thinking that we can draw attention to.

C) For instance they didn't think much of his Authenticity.

7 Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

We are convinced that we are Christ – that sounds funny!

A) But it seems that there were those among these false teachers in Corinth who considered themselves to be some sort of **spiritual elite –**

B) Paul you don't measure up to us!

C) Now How would you respond to accusations like that?

1))Paul could have been tempted to say – **you have no idea what you are talking about**

D))He could have been tempted to get into a verbal – **sparring match with them** – over who was more authentic.

C)Paul doesn't do that – Paul emphasized not who he was – but **Who's He was!** – He belonged to Christ

The question posed here in v.7 really frames this whole discussion on how we measure things.

A)We could paraphrase it this way: Are you going to measure things by the container or the contents?

Aa)Easy thing to do – sometimes container looks amazing – outward looks incredible.

1)Person / Church - Underneath – shallow

C)Also there can be someone – outside – container is not very attractive – underneath – deep / beauty

Samuel made that mistake focused on the outward appearance.

A)God told Samuel to go to the house of Jesse – anoint one of his sons as the next King -

B)First guy Eliab – tall handsome strong – Wow!

C)No! – “Man looks on the outward appearance – but I look on the heart.”

Our Problem: We can't see a person's heart – like God can / like God does

A) **But there are indicators !**

B)Jesus said in Luke 6:45 *For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*

1)Listen to someone enough – you can tell where their heart is at.

C)So when I listen to someone who is always having critical statements coming out his/her mouth – Indicator – Prideful person –

D)There is a person who just thinks they are better than most.

C)Listen to a woman who is always bagging on her husband – Person not in love

anymore.

1) What is coming out of the mouth reveals where her heart is at.

The things we make priorities in our lives also reveal where our heart is at.

Jesus also said: Matthew 6:21 **Where your treasure is your heart will be also!**

A) A person's priorities can often reveal with their treasure is – reveals a certain aspect of where their heart is at.

B) So there are indicators -

C) Paul is saying: Don't focus on the outward appearance – don't focus on the container – focus on the Contents

1) Take a closer look - it would reveal that Paul was definitely the real deal he belonged to Christ, he was authentic and that they were not!

So they didn't think much about Paul's Authenticity

They also didn't think much of His Authority RD V.8-9

8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed — 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

Lets go back and revisit what Paul said in V. 1-2 which might help us explain the why they questioned Paul's authority!

A) In V. 1 Paul described himself with words like meekness gentleness and lowliness – of Christ

B) Those were commendable traits – Jesus himself exemplified when in his earthly ministry.

1) **Meekness** – power under control – Jesus was that!

2) **Gentleness** { Being kind and fair with people.

3) **Lowliness** – Humble Jesus humbled himself –

But Paul's detractors were not impressed by those qualities!

A) They were enamored by the Greco Roman Culture of their day:

B) Commentator R. Kent Hughes offers this helpful insight

“In Paul's day, his enemies in Corinth had so effectively read their Greco-Roman culture back into their Christianity that they interpreted the gospel in terms of their values.

They boasted in the preacher's presence and bearing; they boasted in rhetorical eloquence; they flashed their resumés and endorsements and letters of commendation; they bragged of their large honorariums; they boasted of their connectedness that inferred greatness by association; and, they compared themselves with one another." R Kent Hughes

C) That was their view of a leader and authority – and Paul didn't measure up to that picture at all.

But Paul knew what Jesus thought about leadership: Jesus said in Matthew 20:25-28
25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave — 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Summarize Jesus words with this quote from Warren Wiersbe – “It is possible to be too big to serve God, but you can never be too small!”

Paul Understood that it was possible to Abuse Authority!

A) With Authority we either will build up or tear down!

B) We see the proper use of Authority in V.8 the word edification that word means to Build up - strengthen

C) We also see Authorities Abuse in that verse Paul calls it destruction that word is an antonym for edification that means to tear down

The mentality of Authority in the Church is completely opposite to most of the world.

A) In the world – in the market place they typically use pp to build the work

B) Some of you probably feel used – Maybe used up!

C) Employee abuse – Heather – long days –

1) conform to an image and sacrifice everything for the company

D) Ken – Just wanted to see if you could do it

The world is cut throat and pp become a means to an end

A) In Business they use pp to build the work

B) IN the Church it is the exact opposite – we want to use the work to build the pp!

C) Everything we do here is aimed at building up you and your family in Christ! – Paul gave a great goal – for ministers – in Colossians 1:28 – **Be able to present every man complete in Christ.**

D) Our goal as a ministry is that – See all of us growing in maturity and functioning as believers in society in a way that Glorifies God.

In fact when you think about our Building Project – that too is the goal

A) Not to build a monument or an empire – but rather a place where the building up of your family can happen more effectively.

B) Right now – that project for all of us – is a part of our growing process as believers – God is seeking to build up our faith!

C) So the Proper use of authority is meant to build up – Abuse of authority tears down!

Which is why Paul said back in Ch. 1: 24

24 Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy;

D) Paul wasn't trying to have dominion over them – but he was seeking to work with them – fulfill their Calling – He took great joy in that.

So they didn't think much of Paul's Authority

They also didn't think much of Paul's Appearance. V. 10

10 "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

They were focused on Externals instead of Internals and Eternals!

A) A second Century historical document – gives this physical description of Paul.

B) He was a small man with bowed legs, who had bushy eyebrows, a bald head, and a hooked nose.

1) It went on to say his back was stooped, his voice high-pitched, and his eyes ran constantly.

C) As far as his speech goes – in Lystra unbelievers were so enamored with his message they thought he was the god – Hermes – great Orator

1) But in Corinth they said he wasn't as eloquent as Appollos

2) and there was that incident where Eutychus – fell asleep during a message fell out of the

window and died { **Resurrected**

D) So from an outward perception – Paul wasn't much too behold

Paul answers that accusation in this way:

11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

A) As Paul is exhorting them to look past the container to the contents – there is one thing that He knows will show up loud and clear **CONSISTENCY!**

B) Paul was Consistent – What he was in letters was what he was in Person and would continue to be!

C) Paul ministry had withstood the test of time!

Listen Church – Enamored with the Container not the content

So #1 it is not what people think about us that matters.

#2 It is not what we think of ourselves that matters either!

12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

It would appear from v. 12 that Paul's detractors were living in a mutual admiration society

A) Paul says here it is not wise – when we compare ourselves to others two things can easily happen.

B) On the one hand we can underestimate what God wants to do through our lives.

1) Start looking at someone else who is more gifted than you and it is easy to think – God could never use my life. – I am not like that person.

C) I thought that way for a long time: Underestimate what God wants to do with you to the point – you never make yourself available.

1) Listen: **God will use ability – but he doesn't need it. He isn't looking for ability but for availability.**

D)When he works through a person's lack of ability – everyone knows – that the work was done by God.

So when we start comparing ourselves to others we can underestimate what God might want to do with our lives.

A)The other problem is we can overestimate what God might want to do with us. We can overestimate where we are really at with God.

B)This is a more common mistake that people make. The natural tendency when comparing is to choose the wrong standard.

C) For instance Husband – Always find someone who is worse than me!

1)I am doing pretty good compared to that guy.

Manson

D)Problem is we are choosing the wrong standard –

Listen if you want to make a comparison the Bible gives us the Measure

Ephesians 4:13 Paul refers to it as the **the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**

A)When you start measuring yourself by the stature of the fullness of Christ you are going to come down to earth real fast.

B)**Perfect standard** – Fall way short – If you are here today and you don't know Christ – that is the standard

C)You are thinking that you are going to make it into heaven because you are a better person than the next guy – wrong standard

1)Jesus is the standard – Measured to him – reveals – Sinner –

Cc)Jesus came and showed us what God intended man to be before the fall.

1)The fact that we don't measure up to him only reveals I need a Savior

D) that is what Jesus came to be – Pay the price because we fall short and then to live in us – help us fulfill God's call on our lives

Paul did not have an inflated view of himself – which allowed Paul to stay grounded – doing exactly what God had called him to do.

13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which

God appointed us — a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

Paul uses an Interesting Phrase here

A)The limits of the sphere may refer to the lanes that were allotted to runners in a race. { Each runner has a Lane to Run

B)The Corinthian Christians would recognize this because they loved races and held the famous Isthmian Games in Corinth.

1)Paul is saying, “I’m running in my own lane and not in someone else’s.”

D)Each of us has a lane to run in – appointed by God – A SPHERE OF influence

E)I need to worry about my lane – my calling / my sphere of influence

God is looking to see if we have been faithful running in our lane running in our sphere of influence. Don’t over step boundaries

A)If our view of ourselves gets inflated we can try to widen our lane outside of God’s will

B)Climbing corporate ladder – Bigger salary – more jobs

1)Senior Pastor – called to be an assistant - or vice versa

C)How are you running

Paul was running in his lane – his sphere of influence which included the Church at Corinth which he started – brought the gospel there

A)Paul was content to use his position to build them up to see them flourish in the Lord.

B)Paul’s hope v. 15 is that as their faith is increased – it would actually result in the work of the gospel increasing – Paul’s sphere increase through them

Paul is saying something here ironic – because so many of them had been persuaded by these false teachers – so many had believed the lies – they had actually hindered the work of God

I wasn't just that they were taking credit for what Paul did or accusing Paul falsely – their actions were hindering the work – if for no other reason than this

Paul instead of taking the gospel to Spain like he wanted to Paul was having to deal with these problems

Which not only meant that **Paul was hindered – but that the Churches sphere of influence was also hindered as well**

How often does the work of God get side tracked by peoples petty problems

**Listen the measure that matters is not what Pp think
Not even what we think about ourselves**

The measure that matters is what does God think?

17 But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord." 18 For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

The term that Paul used the most to describe himself – was that he was a servant of Christ. – Underrower

Ben Hur – Ships slaves galley slaves – rowing –

Job of the galley slave is to work underneath the boat – behind the scenes to get people to the destination

When the ship arrives in the port – they don't take all the galley slaves and bring them up on deck so everyone can applaud them – thank them

They thank the captain – He gets applause

Paul says the measure that matters is what does God think – Is God getting the glory

A)Does God approve ?

B)The word **Approve means – by testing –**

C)Gold silver precious stones – wood hay stubble

The question that we all need to ask is – Are we doing what God has called us to do –

Are we thinking rightly about ourselves and our relationship to Him

End with the story of the Violin Student – Applause

A)kept looking to the balcony where an old man was sitting

He was playing for an audience of one !

One day we will all stand