



PART 2

PAUL IN CORINTH:

LEADERSHIP

UNDER FIRE

Chapter Nine

THE LEADER'S WARFARE

HIS BOLDNESS

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #21

A LEADER IS COURAGEOUS

At this point, Paul gave insight into the true nature of the false teachers' accusations. They had caused people to "think of us as if we walked according to the flesh" ([2 Corinthians 10:2](#)).

[2 Corinthians 10:2 \(NASB\)](#)

²"I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, **who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.**"

They were apparently claiming Paul was controlled by sinful desires. That is precisely what it means to "walk according to the flesh" (cf. [Romans 8:1, 5](#)).

[Romans 8:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹"Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

[Romans 8:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵"For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."



Paul elsewhere wrote,

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB)

¹⁹“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Apparently, the false apostles’ *specific* claim was that Paul was driven by the love of money ([2 Corinthians 11:9–13](#); [2 Corinthians 12:13–19](#))—or perhaps even filthier lusts.

2 Corinthians 11:9-13 (NASB)

⁹“And when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.

¹⁰As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia.

¹¹Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do!*

¹²But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting.

¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”

2 Corinthians 12:13-19 (NASB)

¹³“For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children.

¹⁵I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

¹⁶But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit.

¹⁷*Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I?

¹⁸I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps?

¹⁹All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved.”



They wanted the Corinthians to think Paul was utterly disqualified from spiritual leadership ([2 Corinthians 13:6-7](#)).

[2 Corinthians 13:6-7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶“But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.

⁷Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.”

This takes us to the very heart of the conspiracy against Paul. Here is what lay at the very core of all the falsehoods. **Every accusation, every insinuation, and every defamation** they had tried to smear Paul with was merely a way to buttress this suspicion that he was a fraud who was morally bankrupt and driven by fleshly lusts. Paul’s enemies had deliberately planted that suspicion. It had no basis whatsoever in any facts.

Paul had already defended himself against that lie. In [2 Corinthians 1:12](#), you’ll recall, he practically started off the whole epistle by saying,

[2 Corinthians 1:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹²“**For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.**”

In [2 Corinthians 7:2](#), he said, “We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.”

[2 Corinthians 7:2 \(NASB\)](#)

²“**Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one.**”

Thus he had answered the slander without dignifying it with any explicit recognition.

But now he brings the accusation out and lays it on the table for all to see. Lest anyone imagine that he was overreacting, here is what had aroused such boldness in him. This was the real gist of the attacks on him: They had falsely portrayed Paul as a phony, mercenary, Elmer Gantry–type minister. They claimed he was motivated purely by self-interest, corrupt desires, fleshly lusts, and secret motives.

Paul didn’t want to be harsh. He was not looking for conflict. But unless the rebels who invented such wicked falsehoods repented or left before Paul arrived, it would be war. He promised.