

## True Apostles and False Ones

### I. WELCOME, 15 mins.

Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

### II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.

Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God's presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of **strengthening, encouragement, and comfort** they have received for the **cell group, the church and nations**. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for: (1) the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts (2) the church ministry needs (3) blessings for new comers, the sick.

**MISSION ORGANIZATION:** \_\_\_\_\_, their needs: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please contact the church if you don't know the needs of the mission organization.)

**CHURCH MINISTRY:**

### III. WORD, 45 mins.

#### A. Sharing from last Sunday's message.

1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

**B. Discussion Topic:** "True Apostles and False ones"

**Scriptures:** 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

**Memory Verse:** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. (2 Cor. 11:13 NIV)

### I. Foreword

In order to better understand the relationship between Apostle Paul and the church of Corinthians, we need to go back to the earlier passages in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians: "I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel." (4:14-15) Here Paul has assumed the role of a spiritual father, who, upon seeing the beloved children being misled into falsehood, would do everything in his power to put them back to the right track of the truth.

### II. The plot of the false apostles (2 Cor. 11:1-4): to sabotage the relation between Christ and His followers

Paul said he hoped that the Corinthians would put up with a little of his foolishness in the first verse. This somehow has had its root from their discontentment with Paul's boasting of his works. Paul's going to present more detailed explanations in following chapters 16-19 which will appear in our next study soon.

In the verse 2, Paul shows no intention to hide his emotions of jealousy. The godly jealousy he mentioned here reminds us of God's words from His very own mouth: "Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Ex 34:14) What an amazing announcement is it that one of our God's aliases is *Jealous* for He is the Father (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 6:18). Certainly He doesn't want His children to worship other god as if it were their real God. Paul's jealousy comes from the heart of a father who wants to dedicate the Corinthian church to a sheer perfect husband (Christ) as a pure and sincere virgin. However, the false apostles, as deceitful as the snake, are trying to entice the church by preaching another Jesus and mislead people astray from its purity and sincerity. To more of his distress, it breaks the apostle's heart to see the believers had put up with the false ones "easily enough". It was hard for him to understand that the church, which was born into Gospel through his labor, had turned into the false teachings so easily instead of accepting a little of his foolishness. Here we are reminded again of how deceitful the enemy is and its plot to sabotage the relationship established between Christ and the church.

### III. The cunningness of the false apostles (2 Cor. 11:5-6): to debase the real ones

Paul defended for himself his role as Christ's apostle. The false ones came to church with letters of recommendation; Paul didn't (3:1). His appearance was unimpressive and his speaking non attractive (10:10). While the false ones seized every opportunity to profit themselves, Paul denied any provision from the church. He renounced secret and shameful ways, only proclaimed the truth

without deception or distorting the word of God (4:2). Paul was misunderstood and criticized as acting in flesh (10:10). In spite of all the opposition, Paul kept urging the church not to judge from the outside (10:7). Though his speech was untrained, he had the knowledge. All these were made clear to the church in every way (11:6). Therefore he never felt he was any inferior to those “super-apostles” (11:5). He has proved what he was preached by the extraordinary dimensions of his own life!

### **III. The tactics of the false apostles (2 Cor. 11:7-12): to alienate the church**

Paul never burdened anyone in the church for his needs when he was with them. He actually “robbed” other churches by receiving support from them in order to serve the Corinthians (11:8-9). But the Corinthian church was alienated by the false apostles and greatly misunderstood Paul. They even questioned him if he loved them (11:11). Paul mentioned these false ones in the 1<sup>st</sup> book when they made their appearance. Accordingly to Paul, he preached the gospel and offered it free of charge (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 9:18) so that nothing would hinder its spreading (9:12). Paul strived to lower himself in order to elevate them by preaching the gospel of God free of charge (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:7). Paul’s will was to imitate Christ’s way of humility, even to die on the cross, to complete the salvation for all believers who once were sinners but are restored and elevated as God’s children freely. Paul therefore boasted that he had Christ’s “honest” (or truth) in his heart (11:10). In addition he would keep on doing the same to cut the ground from under those who wanted an opportunity to be considered equal with Paul and his co-workers (11:12).

### **IV. The deception of the false apostles (2 Cor. 11:13-15): to masquerade as those in Christ**

What is the image in this world that we can imitate (put on) as Christ’s believers? Jesus says: “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” (Mat 5:16) We have recently learned about giving generously: “He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” (2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 9:9) At the same time, Jesus reproaches those who come in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves: “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ (Mat 7:22-23) Another parable from Jesus is the story of the weeds, showing

what will happen to those false apostles: “Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.” (Mat 13:30) It echoes what Paul say in the 11:15 “Their end will be what their actions deserve.”

#### *Discussion Questions:*

- 1. According to Paul, what are the characteristics shared by the false apostles? What about the real ones?*
- 2. Paul was greatly misunderstood by the Corinthian church, but he was not losing his heart. Instead he came up with more teachings and persuasions to them. Why was Paul doing so? What goal was he striving for?*
- 3. Paul never asked for material support from the church even in great needs. What was his goal?*
- 4. Have you been greatly misunderstood by others? What is the feeling? How did you get over it?*
- 5. What do you do to stay in God’s truth instead of being led astray? If someone preaches a gospel different from what is taught in the Bible, what would you do?*
- 6. Did you usually judge people from their deeds or behaviors? What is your judgment based on now?*
- 7. Share your spiritual life with others. Proclaim God’s in verses 11:13 led by the cell leader. Come to the cell meet next week to see if there is any breakthrough in the area of spiritual judgment.*

#### *Prayer:*

Dear Father, Thank you for teaching us to keep alert even in God’s family. Please give us the discerning spirit so that we can be away from the deceitful ones. Let the wisdom of you Spirit guide us along the way, so we won’t fall victim of the evil ones. Protect us from getting astray by Satan’s temptations, but may we walk in your light. We praise you and say this in the name of Jesus, Amen!

### **I. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.**

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.