

An Abusive Relationship

“For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! For you bear it if someone makes slaves of you, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.” 2 Corinthians 11:19-20.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth before he visited them a third time to expose what were false apostles that had infiltrated the church. Paul was accused of being weak and humble in person but strong and bold in letters. Paul was accused of being lesser than these “super-apostles.” Paul was accused of not being an apostle at all.

So Paul writes to them and points out the fact that Paul had done nothing but taken care of the church, and he did so free of charge. In fact, other churches supported Paul so that Paul could minister and build-up the church in Corinth. Yet the Corinthians were ignoring Paul, who had served them in humility and love, and instead focusing and listening to these false apostles, who were treating them poorly. It was a classic situation of being in what we might call *an abusive relationship*.

The thing about being in an abusive relationship is that people who are in them often can't see how bad it is for them. Those who are outside of the relationship can see it quite clearly. The Corinthians couldn't see that they were putting up with people who were using them for money, status, etc., while rejecting Paul, the very one who ministered to them free of charge and out of love.

This is very applicable because many people today are in an abusive relationship with the world and can't see it. Many people are made slaves of and devoured by their careers, yet put up with them. Many people are abused and hit in the face by the pursuits of money or fame. Many people are taken advantage of by various addictions. A relationship with the world offers nothing but abuse. The world will take everything and offer nothing in return but years of misery.

It's easy for us to look at the Corinthians and see that they were in an abusive relationship. It's harder for us to see this in our own lives, especially while we're in the middle of an abusive relationship with the world. The false apostles were willing to take everything from the Corinthians, even their souls, and the world is willing to do the same to us. Instead of pursuing a relationship with the world and rejecting Christ, let us pursue a relationship with Christ who ministers to us free of charge and out of love. **[DJR]**