

2Corinthians 13:7-10

Questions for Littles: Whom does the apostle ask for the Corinthians to do no evil (v7)? What is not the reason for this? What is the reason for this? What is the apostle willing to have happen to himself in order that the Corinthians would do what is good? What can the apostolic ministers do nothing against but only for (v8)? When are the apostolic ministers glad (v9a)? What else do they pray (v9b)? When does the apostle write these things (v10a)? What does he not want to do when present (v10b)? Who has given him authority? For what is this authority? For what isn't it?

From Whom does believers' resistance to sin come? Not from themselves but from God. The apostle is no believer in a libertine free-will over which God refuses to be sovereign. He prays to God for what he wants the Corinthians to choose: "I pray to God that you do no evil."

There's always the temptation to want those under our leadership to do well so that they will make us look good. But, the apostle asserts that this is not what is going on. In vv5-6 he's been discussing "passing the test" of genuineness. But he actually doesn't care so much for his own appearing genuine as he does for the Corinthians' actually being genuine.

"It's ok with me if we look bad," he says, "just so long as you are actually doing good!" Why? Because the truth prevails. Nothing can be done against it.

In fact, v9, the apostle is actually glad not only when the Corinthians are strong through being made adequate to pass the test, but in particular when he himself is weak. Why? Because then it is seen that all the strength and glory belong to the Lord (cf. 12:5-10).

So, the apostle does not wish to appear strong, like he has done something. To be sure, he will take strong action when he comes if he has to (v10). The authority isn't his, but Christ's, and he must follow Christ. He doesn't have the option of destroying them by going along with their sin.

But, if they respond to what is written while he is absent, then he can continue displaying himself in weakness (cf. vv3-4), and all the strength behind their changing can be seen clearly as God's alone!

In what situations are you in danger of appearing strong in your own strength?