

**“INTEGRITY AND RELIABILITY
FROM GOD”**

2 Corinthians 1:12-22

INTRODUCTION

The Corinthians seemed to be attacking Paul for at least 3 reasons. 1) He took a different route to get to Corinth. 2) He didn't arrive when he said he would. 3) He told the Corinthians to forgive a man who had genuinely repented. They said that Paul lacked integrity, sincerity and that he was a hypocrite and inconsistent. Sometimes people are picky and petty. Christians can expect this type of treatment, however. What was Paul's response to this? It was his conduct, his writing and his preaching!

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

Paul conducted himself in simplicity, straightforwardness and sincerity. He mentioned his conscience giving testimony. He talks about this 21 times! Everyone has a conscience, but it can be damaged, impaired, dulled, muted or even amplified. The more we ignore it, the more that damage is done to it. It's a protective barrier for us. No person comes to Jesus without the sense of guilt. We come wanting our conscience cleansed. **(Hebrews 9)**. Our relationship with Jesus will give us an amplified, sharp and clean conscience. A relationship with Jesus produces integrity.

NO HIDDEN MEANING

Paul indicated that he had no hidden meaning in what he wrote, **v.13**. He wrote what he meant and he meant what he wrote! He was delayed in coming. He made serious plans to come to them, and was not just joking around. He expected the Corinthians to be reasonable, however. Despite what they think of Paul, God is faithful! (Just because you criticize the messenger, don't criticize the message!)

HYPOCRISY

Hypocrisy is the pattern of presenting yourself as someone much better than you really are. This can be an attempt to cover other sins. Paul only fears God himself, not the Corinthians. There are several places in Scripture where God exposes hypocrisy: **Joshua 7** – Aachen; **Acts 5** – Ananias and Saphira; **Acts 16** – the girl with a demonic spirit who followed them at Philippi. Hypocrisy is the work of Satan. If you claim to be a Christian, but your actions don't line up with what you say, you are a hypocrite, phony, 2-faced and a pretender. Jesus said **“blessed are the pure in heart”**. It is no blessing to be a hypocrite, to live a lie and hope to never be discovered.

God is faithful. He *is* integrity. Because of this we can live our lives by the absolute certainty of God's promises! His promises are true. Amen to His glory through us. We are anointed and sealed by the Holy Spirit. “Sealed” has the idea of authenticity.

CONSIDER

While many object to going to church because there are hypocrites there, nobody hates this more than Jesus, yet He loves the church! Remember, just because there are hypocrites in the church does not change the fact that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and rose from the dead. Our eternity depends on this truth!

PRAY

- * That we would have hearts that love the lost!
- * That the Lord would allow us to purchase the land behind the church for youth activities.
- * That God's Spirit would refresh the pastors at our East Coast Pastors' conference in September.