

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1-2

There's an old adage that usually applies to friends who've been separated, "absence makes the heart grow fonder." The longer friends are apart the more affection they feel for one another. *But this wasn't true in Paul's relationship with the Christians at Corinth...*

Absence became a detriment.

The Apostle Paul had spent 18 months in the Greek city of Corinth planting a church. After it was grounded, Paul returned to his home base of Antioch. A few months later he launched his *third missionary journey*.

When he arrived in Ephesus he heard of trouble in Corinth. And from Ephesus Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. He sent it via his coworker, Titus.

And Paul's letter got a mixed reaction...

Some Corinthians *repented*. They responded with a godly sorrow that led to change. But others *resented*. "*How dare Paul rebuke us! Who does he think he is!*"

In fact, detractors in the church at Corinth began to question Paul's authority. They dared to cast doubt on his integrity, and honesty, and even his courage.

It was one thing to disagree with Paul, but the Corinthians resorted to mudslinging and slander. Hey, *absence doesn't always make the heart grow fonder!*

News of the reaction to 1 Corinthians came to Paul while he was in Macedonia. In response, he penned another letter to the church. We call it, **2 Corinthians**.

And in this letter, Paul defends himself and his ministry. He becomes bold and confronts his accusers.

2 Corinthians is an emotionally-charged letter.

Paul *shares his heart* and *pleads his case* as he does nowhere else. Raw feelings get expressed.

And this makes 2 Corinthians a primer for everyone who wants to be involved in Christian ministry. Serving God isn't always easy, hassle-free, fun. It gets messy.

At times, **hurt people hurt people**. 2 Corinthians proves that ministry is a contact sport. An effective servant of God has to not only be loving, but wise.

Take for example **Lifeguarding 101**. Lifeguards learn to never jump in, and swim within reach of someone drowning. The frantic person will overwhelm you, and pull you under with them. What you do is toss them a lifeline... And the same is true in Christian service.

A good heart and a caring attitude isn't the only thing needed in ministry. There is a right way and a wrong way to attempt to rescue spiritually drowning people...

These are the types of issues Paul addresses in 2 Corinthians. Here's a course in **Soul-saving 101!**

The letter begins, "**Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God**

which is at Corinth (that's the city), with all the saints who are in all Achaia" (that's the region):

Achaia was the coastal region of Greece. Corinth was a seaport city on the isthmus east of Athens.

And here's Paul's greeting... "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

This is Paul's greeting in all his letters, "*grace and peace*" - but notice it's grace that always comes first!

You can never have *peace with God* without first receiving the *grace of God*. His forgiveness and favor are the result of His unmerited love, not our goodness.

Verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." What a wonderful phrase. It appears three times in the NT... In Ephesians 1:3, Paul writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ..." Paul praises God for His **past blessings** - the favor bestowed in Christ.

The phrase also appears in 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Peter praises Jesus for giving us **a future hope** - blessings received when He returns.

But here in 2 Corinthians Paul praises God, not for *past blessings*, or *future glories*, but for His **present help and comfort** in the midst of difficulties. He writes, "Blessed be the

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort..."

Realize, the Greeks knew nothing of this kind of God. Greek gods and goddesses threw thunderbolts down from heaven, and inflicted curses on populations.

They specialized in making life hard on those who crossed them. Natural disasters and sudden calamities were attributed to the capricious whims of the gods.

You served and sacrificed to these gods, *not out of love*, but to pacify them - to keep them off your back, and out of your life... What a surprise to these newly converted Corinthians to hear that the true God, is a *God of mercy and comfort*. You can hear their sigh of relief, *"Wow, we now serve a God we don't have to fret. A God we can trust to pick us up, not put us down."*

Paul says as much in verse 4. He refers to the true God as He **"who comforts us in all our tribulation..."**

The English word **"comfort"** is from two Latin words which means **"with strength."** Sure, God lets us cry on His shoulder - *but just long enough to release our pain.*

He doesn't let us sulk! **God joins no pity-parties.**

It reminds me of a young mother who wrote, **"It was one of the worst days of my life: the washing machine broke down, the telephone kept ringing, my head ached, and the mail carrier brought a bill I had no money to pay. Almost to the breaking point, I lifted my one year-old into his highchair, leaned my head against the tray, and began to cry. Without a**

word, my son took his pacifier out of his mouth and stuck it into mine."

*Hey, I know people who like to share pacifiers!*

They get together and nurse wounds - cry over spilt milk - grumble about how hard they've got it - but this is **not** the comfort God specializes in. *His comfort is more than a pacifier!* God gives you strength and power to rise up in His Spirit and tackle the challenges you face.

God comforts us like I use to comfort Little Leaguers when they were at bat and got hit by a pitch. I'd check them over for serious injury, then wiped their tears.

But after about 30 seconds, it was time to shake it off and take your base. There's no time to lick wounds and rub boo-boos. *Look on the bright-side you got on base!*

My High School football coach had a team rule. If you were seriously injured you were suppose to stay on the ground - don't move a muscle - someone would come on the field and assist you to the sidelines.

But, if you just got the breath knocked out of you, or you pulled up with a cramp, my coach wanted you to get off the field on your own, as fast as you could.

As he put it, "I don't want anybody clapping for you just because you got hurt!" Sometimes Christians think they deserve applause just because they got injured.

Understand, Jesus does comfort us, but it's comfort that refortifies us for victory. Jesus refuses to assign permanent disability to anyone. He heals the hurting heart, *but in order to*

*get us back into action.* There's a game to be played, and we're all needed on the field!

Paul says God comforts us, "that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." It's been said, "God's comfort does not terminate in the one who receives it." God works **in us**, in order to work **through us**. He comforts us to **make us comforters**.

God wants to involve us in His work, but we have to go through the necessary preparation. What kind of impact do you think you'd have on suffering people if God saved you; then insulated you from all trouble?

*You never got sick... or stubbed a toe... or sliced a T-shot... or finished last... or got bummed out...* Do you really think the people around you would listen when you talked to them about God's comfort and mercies?

What would you say to your friends if you'd never experienced the hurt they're feeling... never felt the throb of their pain... *How could you help them at all?*

Sure, you could quote some verses, and pass out some sound advice, but how far would it wiggle its way into their soul... if it wasn't laced with real empathy?

When my son, Zach, was four years old he spent the night with his grandparents. Zach and my Dad were in the den playing cowboys. Their toy guns were blazing.

Villains and sheriffs were dropping like flies.

Every time Zach got shot he'd fall to the ground.

His granddaddy would race over to the wounded cowboy, open up his shirt, cut the bullet out of chest, and sew him back up... then they'd start playing again.

At one point in the shootout grandma walked by... when Zach hit the deck she jumped into action.

She opened his shirt, cut the bullet out of his chest, and sewed him up - but rather than popping up to continue playing, Zach just laid motionless on the floor.

Finally, he looked up at her and groaned, "Grandma, there's only one problem. They shot me in the leg."

*To give good comfort you got to know where it hurts!*

Here's a provocative quote. Mull it over, "If you are going to be used by God, he will take you through a multitude of experiences that are not meant for you at all; they are meant to make you useful in his hands."

The trial you're enduring even as we speak, may ultimately have very little to do with you. God is using it to prepare you to minister to someone else *at a time* and *in a way* that will change their course forever.

What you're begrudging and resenting now might be what qualifies you to speak into that person's life.

It's a true statement, "God does not comfort us to make us comfortable, but to make us comforters."

Empathy is one of the most powerful forces on Earth.

The knowledge that someone knows and cares can reach into the deepest depression and lift a person out! *But the person with empathy pays a price to obtain it.*

The tendency for us when we get hurt is to shut down, and lick our wounds - to sit on the sidelines and sulk in our sadness - but healing comes to us when we keep on caring, and loving, and reaching out to others.

**All God's healers are wounded healers.**

And Jesus leads the way. Because of His wounds, He knows how to heal bruised and broken people.

God is pleased - we are blessed - people come to Christ - the Kingdom gets built - the devil is defeated - when we redeem our *hurts*, and turn them into *help!*

Verse 5, "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ."

Listen to this verse in *The Living Bible*, "You can be sure that the more we undergo sufferings for Christ, the more He will shower us with His comfort and encouragement." In other words, an *abundance of suffering* warrants from God an *abundance of comfort*.

I love the following poem, "Until I learn to trust, I never learned to pray; and I did not learn to fully trust till sorrows came my way... Until I felt my weakness, His strength I never knew, nor dreamed 'til I was stricken that He could see me through... Who deepest drinks of sorrow, drinks deepest, too, of grace; He sends the storm so He Himself can be our hiding place... His heart, that seeks our highest good, knowing well that things annoy. We would not long for heaven if earth held the only joy." Again that line, "*we would not long for heaven if earth held the only joy.*"

Verse 6, "Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." When God allowed Paul to suffer, He was teaching him how to empathize. When God comforted Paul, He was demonstrating His comfort to others.

Either way, God worked in Paul to work through him. *Yet that's **not** how it was seen by the Corinthians...*

When they saw Paul suffer they concluded, "Doesn't God protect His own? Paul must not be God's servant."

And when Paul enjoyed peace and prosperity they concluded, "If the world opposes Christ, and Paul is fairing so well, he must not be doing anything for God." *Comfort or conflict*, Paul was in a no-win situation...

Yet here, Paul is setting the record straight, "*Whether condemned or consoled, God is working in him in order to help them - the Corinthians!*" If afflicted, he can better relate to those who need comfort. If consoled, he can better share God's comfort with those who hurt.

He continues, "And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation."

In his critics' eyes Paul *can't win*. But in his own eyes he can't lose. His *hope is stedfast*. If you suffer for Christ now, one day soon you'll be comforted by Him.

Verse 8, "For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we

**despaired even of life."** Whatever hardship Paul suffered in Ephesus it severely crippled him emotionally! He became depressed. Hey, if he'd been alive today some doctor would've put him on meds!

Like an old, tired dog, he just wished God would put him down - call him home - put him out of his misery!

Imagine the great Apostle Paul suffered from depression, and he didn't try to cover it up. He wasn't ashamed. He wanted to be sure the Corinthians knew *It happens!* **Even God's servants can battle the blues!**

Verse 9, **"Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves..."** Some commentators believe a warrant had been issued for Paul's arrest and execution.

Whatever this **"sentence..."** he was in dire straights.

Paul continues, **"Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead..."** Here's the reason God allowed Paul to be depressed. He was stripping him of *self-confidence* and replacing it with a *God-confidence!*

We're just servants. The power comes from God!

To me, it's more than ironic, that my trash pick up day is Monday! That means on Sunday nights I always end a big day of serving Jesus by rolling my trash can out to the street! It's a fitting reminder that God is the one who raises the dead! I just take out the trash!

Paul writes, it's God - it's not him - **"who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us..."** If on the cross, Jesus won for us

such a great victory over death, why would you think He'd watch us flounder in this life? "*He will still deliver us...*" **God is faithful to the finish!**

And notice how Paul sums up his thoughts on Christ's deliverance, "*you also helping together in prayer for us...*" The Greek term is a picture of several people pulling together as a team to lift a heavy object.

Paul reminds the Corinthians that we work **together** in prayer. Life is full of *objects too heavy to lift, obstacles too fixed to move, mountains too high to climb on our own!* But by praying together we can join forces and overcome whatever lies before us!

And we do it for a reason. "*That thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many...*" When we *pray together* and overcome - we'll *praise together* when God answers!

***Prayer by many leads to praise by many!***

**In verse 12** Paul starts to respond to the criticisms that had been leveled at him, "*For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*" Paul tells us up front, he'll be bold in his defense because his conscience is clear! Real authority is born out of a clear conscience!

There's a Chinese proverb that states, "**A clear conscience is the greatest armor.**" Paul would agree.

He had acted "*in simplicity and godly sincerity.*"

Too many folks serve God from a *guilty conscience*. Their service is to atone for not being or doing what's right. Always remember, the foundation for successful Christian ministry is to **be who you say you are**.

"For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand." Apparently, Paul had been accused of duplicity - of not saying what he meant...They said Paul was **not** a man of his word.

Yet here he defends himself, "Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus. And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit - to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea." Paul had written in 1 Corinthians 16 of his plan to visit Corinth, but he qualified it, "*deo volente*" or "*if the Lord permits.*"

Realize, Paul made plans. There's nothing wrong with a Christian *planning - plan **and** pray* - but as you plan be open to God's course corrections. Like a GPS, God may want to recalibrate your path. *Let Him!*

This had happened to Paul. Though he wanted to visit Corinth in route to Macedonia, God redirected him.

And his detractors used this against Paul. They said he couldn't be trusted. They called him wishy-washy! They used his rescheduling to question his credibility.

Paul writes in verse 17, "Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly?" He never did anything flippantly. Paul had a godly reason for all that he did.

He continues, "Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh..." Paul didn't make decisions based on *earthly wisdom*, but on *godly principles*.

Paul resented his critics saying he couldn't be trusted. In response, he tells the Corinthians in verse 18, "But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No." It wasn't that he couldn't make up his mind!

Paul wasn't the guy who said one thing one day, and the opposite the next. His yes was yes. His no was no!

And Paul points to his preaching as proof! "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us - by me, Silvanus, and Timothy - was not Yes and No..." There was never a crack in Paul's voice.

There was never any ambivalence, or hesitancy, or lack of clarity in Paul's message. Paul's hallmark was the definitiveness of the truths that he preached!

For he says, "But in Him (Jesus) was Yes. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us." Here's where Paul got dogmatic - not in his *planning* - but in his *preaching*!

Admittedly, there are a few biblical passages hard to interpret. In those cases it's wise not to be adamant!

*But those passages are the exception rather than the rule.* Paul says in verse 20, "For all the promises of God in (Christ)

*are Yes, and in Him Amen.*" When it comes to Jesus and the Gospel we can be certain.

Whenever we speak of Jesus we need to possess a boldness - *a surety in what we proclaim!* Not a "maybe, or a perhaps, or it could be..." but speak with authority!

Once, on Monday Night Football a reporter was interviewing Arian Foster. Arian is a great running back, and a bit of philosopher. He told the reporter that he enjoyed learning. He could learn from anybody. Then Arian said, "*After all, we're all just out here guessing.*"

Of course, the announcers ooh'ed and ah'ed over his post-modern observation about life. But as soon as he said it, I shouted, "**No, no we're not! With Jesus the guessing is over!**" Jesus is God's "*Yes*" and "*Amen.*"

Jesus is the answer to all life's questions. He is the solution to all of our problems. *He's the ultimate Amen.*

*I don't think anyone on the television heard me, but it definitely made me feel better!*

Verse 21, "*Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*" Recall Corinth was a port city, and Paul draws on a familiar scene. On the shipping docks crates or scrolls were labeled with a waxed impression.

This waxed seal was the owner's proof-of-purchase.

And in a similar way the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is God's seal - it's His proof-of-purchase! God's Spirit's presence in us means we belong to Him!

Paul also refers to the Holy Spirit as our *“guarantee.”*

This was the equivalent of a down-payment. Think of the Holy Spirit as a foretaste of heaven. We get a taste of paradise when we’re in the presence of God’s Spirit!

*“Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.”* The reason Paul didn't visit Corinth is that he felt like chewing them out. He was angry at their immaturity. If he’d stopped like he’d planned, it would’ve been an unpleasant visit.

They need to get their act together before he comes.

*“Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.”*

Paul would never bully or dominate the Corinthians. Jesus is Lord, *not Paul*. He reminds them he’s just a brother who cares, sharing some biblical advice!

Chapter 2, *“But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.”*

The fact Paul won't *“come again in sorrow,”* is an indication he may've paid a visit to Corinth that we're not told about in either his letter, or in the book of Acts.

Acts 18 tells us of Paul's initial visit to Corinth. It was anything but sorrowful. *It was a blast planting a church*

But it is possible, when Paul heard about the problems in Corinth, he made a quick jaunt across the Aegean from Ephesus to address some of the issues.

Verse 2, "For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me? And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all." Paul didn't enjoy being the heavy - *coming down on people and exercising church discipline*. Usually Timothy or Titus were the enforcers.

He wanted to bring people joy - not cause sorrow.

And this is how we roll here at CalvaryCSM. I like to teach you God's Word, and give you cause to rejoice.

Whereas, if you do something that threatens yourself or others, and need to be rebuked, we send out the elders. And after the elders, dealing with me is a joy.

Folks can get mad at the elders, and they'll still come to church and hear God's Word. But if they get mad at me, they leave. Thus, if I can avoid sorrow-producing confrontations; folks are more likely to stay and grow.

Paul may've learned this the hard way. That's why he didn't visit the Corinthians when he had planned.

Instead, of risking a face-to-face blow-up, when Paul got to Macedonia, he sent them this second letter.

He says in verse 4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you."

1 Corinthians had been bathed in tears. He'd written the letter in "anguish of heart" and "with many tears."

"But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me," but all of you to some extent - not to be too severe." The Corinthian's sin was not just a personal grievance to Paul. It should've grieved everyone. The rebellion he'd dealt with back in 1 Corinthians 5 was a stain on the whole church... *You recall the situation...*

A brother in the church was shacking up with his step-mom - and the church had refused to step in!

They were tolerating incest. And worse, they were proud of their tolerance. Sounds like many people today. They said they were being non-judgmental.

But Paul rebuked them. The man's sin was a cancer, that was eating away at the whole body if not treated.

Paul ordered the church to insist on this man's *repentance or removal*. *He's to shape up or ship out.*

And apparently, the man had shaped up! Verse 6, "This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.

*Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him."*

Apparently, after reading Paul's first letter, the church obeyed, and gave the rebellious brother the boot. But when he repented they swung to the opposite end of the pendulum. They were reluctant to restore him.

Paul now exhorts them, *"reaffirm your love to him."*

Verse 9, "For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things."

Usually, we think of church discipline as a test for the person who gets rebuked, but more so, it indicates the church's spiritual health. *Do we love righteousness?*

It's actually a test for the church and its leaders.

Paul continues in verse 10, "Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."

Whenever a person repents, our forgiveness needs to be swift. If not, we play right into the devil's hands!

Revelation 12:10 calls Satan, "the accuser of the brethren." Satan loves to take a person Jesus forgives, and bury him under a mound of condemnation.

*Let's not help him.* Church people actually assist the devil by either *withholding forgiveness* or *tolerating sin*. Be quick, to both **deal with sin and to extend mercy**.

"Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia." Paul is still explaining why he didn't come to Corinth. He'd sent Titus to deliver his first letter, but when he left for Macedonia, Titus had yet to report back with the Corinthians' response. Paul wanted to hear from Titus, before he visited Corinth.

And it amazes me that most of the ill-feelings the Corinthians had toward Paul arose simply because he didn't visit them when he said he might... It just goes to show the *littlest stuff* can cause the *biggest problems*.

Folks have allowed a miscommunication to get them mad at me. Rather than assume the best, or just ask - they jump to conclusions and believe what's not true.

It's sad. We need to watch out for the little stuff.

Paul concludes this chapter, "Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place." Here some historical background is helpful...

A "Roman Triumph" was the equivalent of a modern day ticker-tape parade. When a general won a victory on foreign soil, captured 5000 of the enemy's army, and gained new territory for the Emperor - he was awarded a state-sanctioned procession - **a Triumph**.

It was similar to what Toronto hosted last week for the Raptors after they won the NBA championship.

The honored general would ride in a golden chariot, with his officers. The spoils of victory were on display.

His *conquering army*, dragging along his *conquered foe*, marched behind. Priests added to the spectacle by burning incense, and filling the streets with an aroma.

Paul uses this familiar idiom to portray Jesus, our conquering general. He forever celebrates His triumph!

Jesus won a battle on foreign soil. He was God of heaven, but was dispatched to this world... He too, conquered 5000

people. On the Day of Pentecost 3000 souls were saved. Days later another 2000 joined the ranks. Today all believers are part of the Victor's spoils!

Paul adds to his analogy of the conquering general, verse 15, "For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life." I love this... *we're the Victor's spoils, we're the foe Christ captured, we're the conquering army who returns with Jesus - but we're also the fragrance of Christ!* That means we're **little stinkers**

*Wherever we go we give off the aroma of Christ.*

To other Christians we are a breath of fresh air. *Have you noticed when you discover another Christian in the office there's an instant camaraderie? A bond forms.*

But to folks who reject Jesus we are an unpleasant odor. I guess, since we're *the body of Christ*, you could call us, "**body odor.**" But when an unbeliever smells our stench He opens a window and hopes we leave. **We're sweet perfume to some and noxious fumes to others!**

Yet if no one smells me at all - *if I'm odorless* - then there's something wrong! When I walk into a room the people present should either *hold their nose* or *love to sniff*. Either way, I want to give off a smell for Jesus!

Always remember, we are "***the fragrance of Christ!***"

Paul asks, "**And who is sufficient for these things?**" All the glory belongs to our victorious General Jesus!

Verse 17, "For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ." The one smell, *a foul odor indeed*, neither believer or unbeliever should have to tolerate is **hypocrisy**. It stinks it up for us all!

Phoniness is rotten eggs and spoiled milk mixed.

Whatever you do - *don't play the hypocrite*.

In closing, note Paul wasn't a "*peddler of the Word*."

Like a used car dealer on a 2 AM TV commercial, Paul never slapped the hood, and told-you-what-you-wanted-to-hear. Paul was sincere. He spoke the truth!

And this should be true of every witness for Jesus.

You don't have to be smart, articulate, talented - but what every spokesman for Jesus should be is *sincere!*