

# Commendation For Those Whom God Uses

# Fundamental Truths about Commendation

## ➤ God commands commending others.

- *Php. 2:29, "So receive him [Epaphroditus] in the Lord with all joy and **honor such men.**"*
- *Rom. 12:10, "Love one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo one another in showing honor.**"*
- *Rom. 13:7, "Pay to all what is owed to them ... **honor to whom honor is owed.**"*
- *1 Tim. 5:17 "Let the elders who rule well be **considered worthy of double honor**, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching."*

# Fundamental Truths about Commendation

## We must value others more than self.

- Php. 2:3, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility **count others more significant than yourselves.**” (ESV)
- “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem other better than themselves.**” (KJV)
- Note the contrasts:  
**Selfish ambition (strife) /conceit (vain glory)**  
**vs. lowliness of mind/humility**

# Fundamental Truths about Commendation

➤ We are to demonstrate by example, showing honor to others.

- Rom. 12:10, “Love one another with brotherly affection. **Outdo one another in showing honor.**”  
(Vincent: leading the way in showing the honor that is due)
- Note: this will be impossible without a genuine love for the other brother or sister.

# Fundamental Truths about Commendation

➤ **We are to demonstrate by example, showing honor to others.**

- **This exhortation applies both without and within the church of God.**
- *Rom.13:7, “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”*
- *1 Timothy 5:17, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching.”*

## THEME VERSE

*“Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.” -- 2 Cor. 10:12*

**Common Mistakes in Commending**



1. Not understanding oneself and one's giftedness – tendency to overrate that.
2. Not understanding how to evaluate spirituality and spiritual power.

10:10, “His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech **contemptible.**” (KJV) (ESV = **of no account**)

## 2. (Cont.) Not understanding how to evaluate spirituality and spiritual power.

10:10, “His letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech **contemptible**.” (KJV) (ESV of no account)

- They think it is powerful bodily presence, dynamic gestures and energetic movement (v. 10).
- They think it is powerful voice and skillful oratory (v. 10).
- But “It was not the manner of his speech, but its matter, which attracted his hearers to him.” (Cambridge Bible)

**Common Mistakes in Commending**

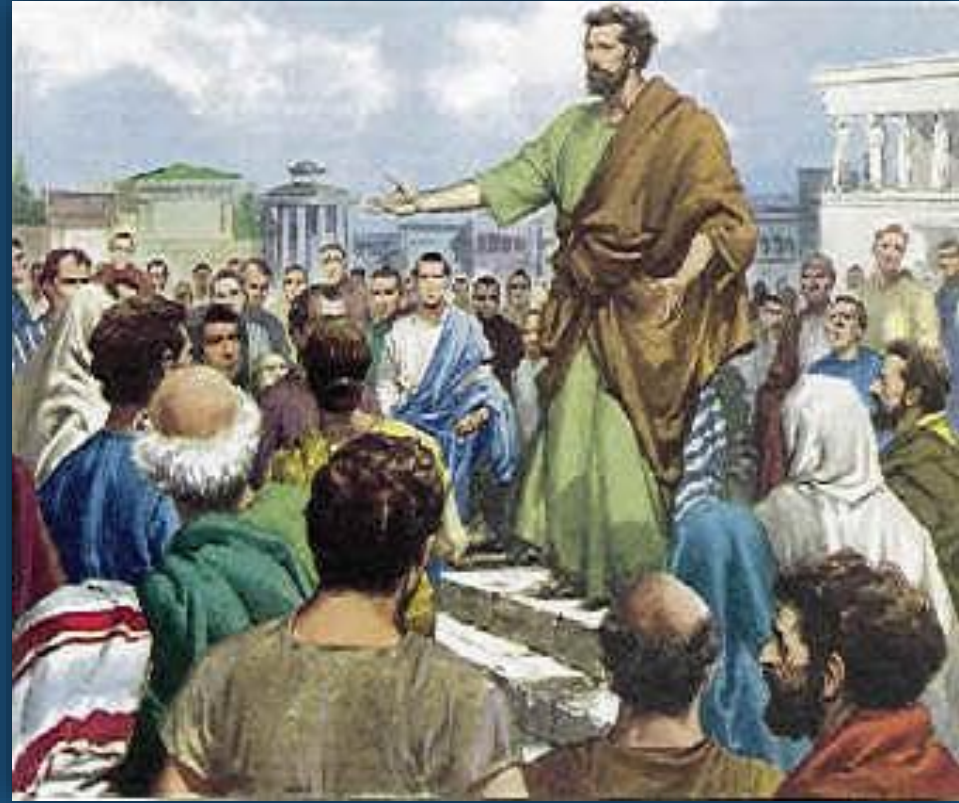


## 2. (Cont.) Not understanding how to evaluate spirituality and spiritual power.

2 Cor. 10:17, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” 18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”

- It is not what critics say that matters.
- The critics will likely be totally wrong (more next slide).
- What matters is whom the Lord Himself commends.

Does this look like a man whose speech is of “no account”?



### 3. Comparing oneself with one's peers, who are liable to flatter each other while also seeking to outdo each other.

- *“They measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves among themselves” (v. 12a).*
- *“In doing this they are not wise [do not understand]” (12b).*
- They do not understand their own character or how to properly evaluate godly character.
- They are unwise because the standard [themselves or their peers] they are using is flawed.

How many there are, and it is to be feared even among professing Christians, who have no other standard of excellence than themselves. Their views are the standard of orthodoxy; their modes of worship are the standard of the proper manner of devotion; their habits and customs are in their own estimation perfect; and their own characters are the models of excellence, and they see little or no excellence in those who differ from them. They look on themselves as the true measure of orthodoxy, humility, zeal, and piety; and they condemn all others, however excellent they may be, who differ from them. (Barnes)

## **Common Mistakes in Commending**



4. Evaluating people on what one has heard about them rather than on personal acquaintance – to judge by public report.

- Some in Corinth thought Paul's letters and Paul's personal presence would be quite different.

- He assured them that was not the case:

*10:10, "They say, 'His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. 11 Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present.'"*

**Common Mistakes in Commending**



## 5. Commending oneself at all.

- 2 Cor. 10:17–18, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. For **it is not the one who commends himself who is approved**, but the one whom the Lord commends.”
- 2 Cor. 10:12, “For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are **not wise.**”
- Avoid any boasting about oneself.
- Seek only the Lord’s commendation.
- Regard the Lord as the source of all success and all blessing.
- Don’t compare! Remember, that is “not wise.” Why?

**Common Mistakes in Commending**



## Why is it “not wise” to commend oneself?

- People (including self) usually evaluate by what they can see, but evaluating ministry has to include the motive of the heart and that is not visible for evaluation.
- In 2 Cor. 10:12, the commendation comes from comparing with others, whose motives we do not know.
- Men boast of things unrelated to true piety: pedigree, education, race, upbringing, social status, physique, pursuits, and positions.
- Beware of boasters! **“A boaster is one with whom it is no sooner done than said.”**

## Common Mistakes in Commending



6. Failing to fault believers. Faulting believers is sometimes necessary, especially from the leaders. Paul both commended and found fault with the Corinthians.

- 1Cor.11:2, “Now **I commend you** because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.”
- 11:17, “But in the following instructions **I do not commend you**, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse.”
- 11:22, “What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? **Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not.**”

**Common Mistakes in Commending**



6. (Cont.) Failing to fault believers. Faulting believers is sometimes necessary, especially from the leaders. Both Paul and John publicly faulted such.

- Paul faulted **Mark** for not continuing with them on the mission (Acts 15:37-38).
- Paul faulted **Demas** for loving the present world and deserting Paul (2 Tim. 4:10).
- Paul faulted **Euodias** and **Syntyche** for their disunity (Phil. 4:2).
- John faulted **Diotrephes** for several sins (3 John 1:9-10).

**Common Mistakes in Commending**



# Commendation Lessons from Romans 16

Note how much  
care and space  
Paul takes to name  
and attribute good  
to over 20  
individuals!

## Phoebe

*Romans 16:1-2, “I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, <sup>2</sup> that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”*

- She was a “servant” of her church.
- She was a “helper of many” (lit. a champion, one who “stands before.”)
- She had “stood before” many; they were now to stand by/”assist” her in any way they could.
- They were to “receive” her as she deserved as a worthy saint.
- Note: **God tenderly looks after those who have a servant’s heart.**

# Commendation Lessons from Romans 16

- **Prisca and Aquila** – risked their necks
- **Mary** – worked hard
- **Andronicus and Junia** – Paul’s relatives, fellow prisoners, well-known by apostles, early believers
- **Many others** also singled out by Paul
- **Learn for our emulation:**
  - ✓ Commended for *spiritual risk*
  - ✓ Commended for service that was *hard work* and sometimes brought imprisonment.
  - ✓ Commended for *long-time faithfulness.*
  - ✓ Commended by name though many are obscure, mentioned nowhere else.
  - ✓ Paul’s carefulness to honor others.

The best  
commendation:

“Approved  
in  
Christ”

- **Apelles** (Rom. 16:10, “Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ.”)
  - The “approved” are the tried and proven to be genuine.
  - One who has been tested and found true, as a “member of Christ.” Perhaps he had borne special suffering or sorrow with strong faith. (Cambridge)
  - 2 Cor. 10:18, “For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”
  - 1 Corinthians 11:19, “For there must be also heresies (factions – ESV) among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” (KJV)
  - In church factions, there are usually those who are **approved by the Lord.**

# How can we commend ourselves to the Lord?

2 Cor 4:2, “But we have **renounced** disgraceful, underhanded ways. We **refuse to practice** cunning or to tamper with God’s word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience in the sight of God.”

- Commending ourselves to God begins with the negative of “renouncing” and “refusing” anything impure or untrue.
- Renounce = avoid, spurn, **scorn with aversion.**
- **Refuse to practice** = lit. “not walking in.”

# How can we commend ourselves to the Lord and to other believers?

2 Cor 4:2, “But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God’s word, **but by the open statement of the truth** we would **commend ourselves to everyone’s conscience** in the sight of God.”

- “Open statement” = “manifestation” (KJV), “open proclamation” (NASB)
- We put no focus on ourselves but all on **proclaiming with clarity God’s Word.**

Be Encouraged!  
God Graciously Commends Imperfect Believers.

“And what more shall I say? For time would fail me  
to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of  
David and Samuel and the prophets—”

*Hebrews 11:32*

Do we view personal commendation in this way?

“I expressed my willingness to be put on the shelf, willing not to be the one He used, if only I might see Him work!”

Isobel Kuhn