

2 Corinthians 11:1-2

by St. John Chrysostom

St. John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of spiritual purity and vigilance against false teachings in his defense of apostolic authority.

Scripture: Matthew 6:24, 2 Corinthians 11:1-12, 1 Timothy 6:10

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "False Teachings"

Description

John Chrysostom emphasizes the importance of humility and selflessness in ministry, highlighting the need to prioritize the well-being and salvation of others over personal glory or gain. He expresses his deep concern for the spiritual welfare of his audience, using the metaphor of jealousy to illustrate his intense desire for their spiritual growth and protection. Chrysostom compares the Church to a pure virgin espoused to Christ, underscoring the sacredness and purity of the relationship between believers and Christ. He warns against false teachings and the danger of being led astray from the simplicity and truth found in Christ, urging believers to remain steadfast in their faith and not be deceived by deceptive doctrines.

Transcript

Would that you could bear with me in a little foolishness and, indeed you do bear with me.

Being about to enter upon his own praises he uses much previous correction. And he does this not once or twice, although the necessity of the subject, and what he had often said, were sufficient excuse for him. For he that remembers sins which God remembered not, and who therefore says that he was unworthy of the very name of the Apostles, even by the most insensate is seen clearly not to be saying what he is now going to say, for the sake of glory. For if one must say something startling, even this would be especially injurious to his glory, his speaking something about himself; and to the more part it is offensive. But nevertheless he regarded not timidly any of these things, but he looked to one thing, the salvation of his hearers. But still in order that he might not cause harm to the unthinking by this, by saying, I mean, great things of himself, he employs out of abundant caution these many preparatory correctives, and says, Would that you could bear with me, while I play the fool in some little things, yea, rather, ye do indeed bear with me. Beholdest thou wisdom? For when he says, would that, it is as putting it at their disposal: but when he even asserts [that they do], it is as confiding greatly in their affection, and as declaring that he both loves and is loved. Yea, rather, not from bare love merely, but from a sort of warm and insane passion he says that they ought to bear with him even when he plays the fool. And therefore he added,

For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. He did not say, 'for I love you,' but uses a term far more vehement than this. For those souls are jealous which burn ardently for those they love, and jealousy can in no other way be begotten than out of a vehement affection. Then that they may not think, that it is for the sake of power, or honor, or wealth, or any other such like thing, that he desires their affection, he added, with a jealousy of God. For God also is said to be jealous, not that any should suppose passion, (for the Godhead is impassible,) but that all may know that He does all things from no other regard than their sakes over whom He is jealous; not that Himself may gain anything, but that He may save them. Among men indeed jealousy arises not from this cause, but for the sake of their own repose; not because the beloved ones sustain outrage, but lest these who love them should be wounded, and be outshone in the good graces, and stand lower in the affections, of the beloved. But here it is not so. 'For I care not,' he says, 'for this, lest I should stand lower in your esteem; but lest I should see you corrupted. For such is God's jealousy; and such is mine also, intense at once and pure.' Then there is also this necessary reason;

For I espoused you to one husband, as a pure virgin. 'Therefore I am jealous, not for myself, but for him to whom I have espoused you.' For the present time is the time of espousal, but the time of the nuptials is another; when they sing, 'the Bridegroom has risen up.' Oh what things unheard of! In the world they are virgins before the marriage, but after the marriage no longer. But here it is not so: but even though they be not virgins before this marriage, after the marriage they become virgins. So the whole Church is a virgin. For addressing himself even to all, both husbands and wives, he speaks thus. But let us see what he brought and espoused us with, what kind of nuptial gifts. Not gold, not silver, but the kingdom of heaven. Wherefore also he said, We are ambassadors on behalf of Christ, and beseeches them, when he was about to receive the Bride. What happened in Abraham's case was a type of this. Genesis 24:4, etc. For he sent his faithful servant to seek a Gentile maiden in marriage; and in this case God sent His own servants to seek the Church in marriage for His son, and prophets from of old saying, Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and forget your own people and your father's house, and the King shall desire your beauty. Psalm 45:10-11 Do you see the prophet also espousing? Do you see the Apostle too expressing the same thing himself with much boldness, and saying, I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ? Do you see wisdom again? For having said, 'You ought to bear with me,' he did not say, 'for I am your teacher and I speak not for my own sake:' but he uses this expression which invested them with special dignity, placing himself in the room of her who promotes a match, and them in the rank of the bride; and he adds these words;

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is toward Christ.

'For although the destruction be yours [alone], yet is the sorrow mine as well.' And consider his wisdom. For he does not assert, although they were corrupted; and so he showed when he said, When your obedience is fulfilled, 2 Corinthians 10:6 and I shall bewail many which have sinned already; 2 Corinthians 12:21 but still he does not leave them to get shameless. And therefore he says, lest at any time. For this neither condemns nor is silent; for neither course were safe, whether to speak out plainly or to conceal perpetually. Therefore he employs this middle form, saying, lest at any time. For this is the language neither of one that entirely distrusts, nor entirely relies on them, but of one who stands between these two. In this way then he palliated, but by his mention of that history threw them into an indescribable terror, and cuts them off from all forgiveness. For even although the serpent was malignant, and she senseless, yet

did none of these things snatch the woman from punishment. 'Beware then,' he says, 'lest such be your fate, and there be naught to screen you. For he too promising greater things, so deceived.' Whence it is plain that these too, by boasting and puffing themselves up, deceived. And this may be conjectured not from this place only, but also from what he says afterwards,

2 Corinthians 11:4

If he that comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if you receive a different Spirit which you did not receive, or a different Gospel which you did not accept, you do well to bear with him.

And he does not say, 'Lest by any means as Adam was deceived.' but shows that those men are but women who are thus abused, for it is the part of woman to be deceived. And he did not say, 'so you also should be deceived.' but keeping up the metaphor, he says, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is toward Christ. 'From the simplicity, I say, not from wickedness; neither out of wickedness [is it], nor out of your not believing, but out of simplicity.' But, nevertheless, not even under such circumstances are the deceived entitled to forgiveness, as Eve showed. But if this does not entitle to forgiveness, much more will it not do so, when through vain-glory any is so.

2. For if he that comes preaches another Jesus whom we did not preach: showing hereby that their deceivers were not Corinthians, but persons from some other quarter previously corrupted: wherefore he says, he that comes.

If you receive a different Spirit, if a different Gospel which you did not accept, you do well to bear with him. What do you say? You that said to the Galatians, If any preach another Gospel to you than that you have received, let him be anathema; do you now say, you do well to bear with him? And yet on this account it were meet not to bear with, but to recoil, from them; but if they say the same things, it is meet to bear with them. How then do you say, 'because they say the same things, it is not meet to bear with them?' for he says, 'if they said other things, it were meet to bear with them.'

Let us then give good heed, for the danger is great, and the precipice deep, if men run past this carelessly; and what is here said gives an entrance to all the heresies. What then is the sense of these words? Those persons so boasted as if the Apostles taught incompletely, and they were introducing somewhat more than they. For it is probable that with much idle talk, they were bringing in senseless rubbish so as to overlay these doctrines. And therefore he made mention of the serpent and of Eve who was thus deceived by the expectation of acquiring more.

And alluding to this in the former Epistle also, he said, Now you have become rich, you have reigned as kings without us; and again, we are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:8 Since then it was probable that using the wisdom which is without, they talked much idly, what he says is this: that 'if these persons said any thing more, and preached a different Christ who ought to have been preached, but we omitted it, you do well to bear with them.'

For on this account he added, whom we did not preach. 'But if the chief points of the faith are the same, what have ye the more of them? For whatsoever things they may say, they will say nothing more than what we have said.' And observe with what precision he states the case. For he did not say, 'if he that comes says any thing more;' for they did say something more, haranguing with more authority and with much beauty of language; wherefore he did not say this, but what? [If] he that comes preaches another Jesus, a thing which had no need of that array of words: or you receive a different Spirit, (for neither was

there need of words in this case;) that is to say, 'makes you richer in grace;' or a different Gospel which you did not accept, (nor did this again stand in need of words,) you do well to bear with him.

But consider, I pray you, how he every where uses such a definition as shows that nothing very great, nor indeed any thing more, had been introduced by them. For when he had said, If he that comes preaches another Jesus, he added, whom we did not preach; and you receive a different Spirit, he subjoined, which you did not receive; or a different Gospel, he added, which you did not accept, by all these showing that it is meet to attend to them, not simply if they say something more, but if they said any thing more which ought to have been said and was by us omitted.

But if it ought not to have been said, and was therefore not said by us; or if they say only the same things as we, why gape ye so admiringly upon them? 'And yet if they say the same things,' says one, 'wherefore do you hinder them?' Because that using hypocrisy, they introduce strange doctrines. This however for the present he does not say, but afterwards asserts it, when he says, They fashion themselves into Apostles of Christ; 2 Corinthians 11:13 for the present he withdraws the disciples from their authority by less offensive considerations; and this not out of envy to them, but to secure these.

Else why does he not hinder Apollos, who was, however, a learned man, and mighty in the Scriptures; Acts 18:24; 1 Corinthians 16:12 but even beseeches him, and promises he will send him? Because together with his learning he preserved also the integrity of the doctrines; but with these it was the reverse. And therefore he wars with them and blames the disciples for gaping admiringly upon them, saying, 'if anything that should have been said we omitted and they supplied, we do not hinder you from giving heed to them: but if all has been fully completed by us and nothing left deficient, whence is it that they caught you?' Wherefore also he adds,

2 Corinthians 11:5

For I reckon that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles, no longer making comparison of himself with them, but with Peter and the rest. 'So that if they know more than I do, [they know more] than they also.' And observe how here also he shows modesty. For he did not say, 'the Apostles said nothing more than I,' but what? I reckon, so I deem, that I am not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles. For since this also appeared to bespeak an inferiority in him, that those having preceded him were of greater name; and more respect was entertained for them, and these persons were intending to foist themselves in; therefore he makes this comparison of himself with them with the dignity that becomes him. Therefore he also mentions them with encomiums, not speaking simply of the Apostles, but the very chiefest, meaning Peter and James and John.

2 Corinthians 11:6

3. But though I be rude in speech, yet am I not in knowledge.

For since those that corrupted the Corinthians had the advantage in this, that they were not rude; he mentions this also, showing that he was not ashamed of, but even prided himself upon it. And he said not, But though I be rude in speech, yet so also are they, for this would have seemed to be accusing them as well as himself, and exalting these: but he overthrows the thing itself, the wisdom from without. And indeed in his former Epistle he contends even vehemently about this thing, saying that it not only contributes nothing to the Preaching, but it even throws a shadow on the glory of the Cross; 1 Corinthians 2:1 for he says, I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom unto you, lest the cross of Christ should be made

void; 1 Corinthians 1:17 and many other things of the same kind; because in knowledge they were rude, which is also the extremest form of rudeness. When therefore it was necessary to institute a comparison in those things which were great, he compares himself with the Apostles: but when to show that which appeared to be a deficiency, he no longer does this, but grapples with the thing itself and shows that it was a superiority. And when indeed no necessity urged him, he says that he is the least of the Apostles, and not worthy even of the title; but here again when occasion called, he says that he is not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles. For he knew that this would most advantage the disciples. Wherefore also he adds,

Nay, in every thing we have made it manifest among all men to youward. For here again he accuses the false Apostles as walking in craftiness. 2 Corinthians 4:2 And he said this of himself before also, that he did not live after the outward appearance, nor preach handling the word deceitfully 2 Corinthians 4:2 and corrupting it. But those men were one thing and appeared another. But not so he. Wherefore also he every where assumes a high tone, as doing nothing with a view to men's opinion nor concealing anything about himself. As he also said before, by the manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience, 2 Corinthians 4:2 so now again he says in every thing we have made it manifest to you. But what does this mean? 'We are rude,' he said, 'and do not conceal it: we receive from some persons and we do not keep it secret. We receive then from you, and we pretend not that we do not receive, as they do when they receive, but we make every thing that we do manifest unto you;' which was the conduct of one that both had exceeding confidence in them, and told them every thing truly. Wherefore he also calls them witnesses, saying now, among all men to youward, and also before, For we write none other things unto you, than what you read or even acknowledge. 2 Corinthians 1:13

4. Then after he had defended his own conduct he goes on next to say with severity,

2 Corinthians 11:7

Or did I commit a sin in abasing myself that you might be exalted?

And in explanation of this, he adds,

2 Corinthians 11:8

I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you.

What he says is this; 'I lived in straitness;' for this is the force of abasing myself. 'Can you then lay this to my charge? And do you therefore lift up yourselves against me, because I abased myself by begging, by enduring straits, by suffering, by hungering, that you might be exalted?' And how were they exalted by his being in straits? They were more edified and were not offended; which also might [well] be a very great accusation of them and a reproach of their weakness; that it was not possible in any other way to lead them on than by first abasing himself. 'Do ye then lay it to my charge that I abased myself? But thereby you were exalted.' For since he said even above that they accused him, for that when present he was lowly, and when absent bold, in defending himself he here strikes them again, saying, 'this too was for your sakes.'

I robbed other churches. Here finally he speaks reproachfully, but his former words prevent these from seeming offensive; for he said, Bear with me in a little foolishness: and before all his other achievements makes this his first boast. For this worldly men look to especially, and on this also those his adversaries greatly prided themselves. Therefore it is that he does not first enter on the subject of his perils, nor yet of

his miracles, but on this of his contempt of money, because they prided themselves on this; and at the same time he also hints that they were wealthy. But what is to be admired in him is this, that when he was able to say that he was even supported by his own hands, he did not say this; but says that which especially shamed them and yet was no encomium on himself, namely, 'I took from others.' And he did not say took, but robbed, that is, 'I stripped them, and made them poor.' And what surely is greater, that it was not for superfluities, but for his necessities, for when he says 'wages,' he means necessary subsistence. And what is more grievous yet, to minister unto you. We preach to you; and when I ought to be supported by you, I have enjoyed this at others' hands. The accusation is twofold, or rather three-fold; that when both living among them and ministering to them, and seeking necessary support, he had others supplying his wants. Great the excess, of the one negligence, of the other in zeal! For these sent to him even when at a great distance, and those did not even support him when among them.

5. Then because he had vehemently scourged them, he quietly again relaxes the vehemence of his rebuke, saying,

2 Corinthians 11:9

And when I was present with you, and was in want, I was not a burden on any man.

For he did not say, 'ye did not give to me,' but, 'I did not take,' for as yet he spares them. But nevertheless even in the subduedness of his language he covertly strikes them again, for the word, present, is exceedingly emphatic, and so is in want. For that they might not say, 'what matter then, if you had [enough]?' he added, and was in want.

I was not a burden on you. Here again he hits them gently, as making such contributions reluctantly, as feeling them a burden. Then comes the reason also, full of accusation and fraught with jealousy. Wherefore also he introduced it, not in the way of a leading point, but as informing them whence and by whom he was supported, so as to stimulate them again, in an unsuspecting way, as to the point of almsgiving;

For the measure of my want, he says, the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied. Do you see how he provokes them again, by bringing forward those that had ministered to him? For inspiring them first with a desire of knowing who these could be, when he said, I robbed other churches; he then mentions them also by name; which would incite them also unto almsgiving. For he thus persuades those who had been beaten [by them] in the matter of supporting the Apostle, not to be also beaten in the succor they gave to the poor. And he says this also in his Epistle to the Macedonians themselves, For in my necessities ye sent unto me once and again, even in the beginning of the Gospel; Philippians 4:16 which point also was a very great commendation of them, that from the very beginning they shone forth. But observe how everywhere he mentions his necessity, and no where a superfluity. Now therefore by saying present, and in want he showed that he ought to have been supported by the Corinthians; and by the words, they supplied the measure of my want, he shows that he did not so much as ask. And he assigns a reason which was not the real one. What then is this? That he had received from others; for, says he, the measure of my want those that came supplied. 'For this reason,' he says, 'I was not a burden; not because I had no confidence in you.' And yet it is for this latter reason that he so acts, and he shows it in what follows; but does not say it plainly, but throws it into the shade, leaving it to the conscience of his hearers. And he gives proof of it covertly in what follows, by saying,

And in every thing I kept myself from being burdensome, and so will I keep myself. For think not, says he, that I say these things that I may receive. Now the words so will I keep myself, are severer, if he has not even yet confidence in them; but once for all had given up the idea of receiving anything from them. He shows, moreover, that they even considered this to be a burden; wherefore he said, I have kept myself from being burdensome, and so will I keep myself. He says this in his former Epistle also, I write not this that it may be so done unto me; for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void. 1 Corinthians 9:15 And here again, I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.

6. Then, that he may not seem to speak these things for the sake of winning them on the better [to do this], he says,

2 Corinthians 11:10

As the truth of Christ is in me. 'Do not think that I therefore have spoken, that I may receive, that I may the rather draw you on: for,' says he, as the truth is in me,

No man shall stop me of this glorying in the regions of Achaia. For that none should think again that he is grieved at this, or that he speaks these things in anger, he even calls the thing a glorying. And in his former Epistle too he dressed it out in like terms. For so that he may not wound them there either, he says, What then is my reward? That when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge. 1 Corinthians 9:18 And as he there calls it reward, so does he here glorying, that they may not be excessively ashamed at what he said, as if he were asking and they gave not to him. 'For, what, if even ye would give?' says he, 'Yet I do not accept it.' And the expression, shall not stop me, is a metaphor taken from rivers, or from the report, as if running every where, of his receiving nothing. 'You stop not with your giving this my freedom of speech.' But he said not, 'ye stop not,' which would have been too cutting, but it no man shall stop me in the regions of Achaia. This again was like giving them a fatal blow, and exceedingly apt to deject and pain them, since they were the only persons he refused [to take from]. 'For if he made that his boast, it were meet to make it so every where: but if he only does so among us, perchance this is owing to our weakness.' Lest therefore they should so reason and be dejected, see how he corrects this.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Wherefore? Because I love you not? God knows.

Quickly [is it done], and by an easy method. But still, not even so did he rid them of those charges. For he neither said, 'you are not weak,' nor yet, 'you are strong;' but, I love you, which very greatly aggravated the accusation against them. For the not receiving from them, because they felt it an exceeding grievance, was a proof of special love toward them. So he acted in two contrary ways out of love; he both did receive, and did not receive: but this contrariety was on account of the disposition of the givers. And he did not say, 'I therefore do not take of you, because I exceedingly love you,' for this would have contained an accusation of their weakness and have thrown them into distress; but he turned what he said to another reason. What then is this?

2 Corinthians 11:12

That I may cut off occasion from them that desire an occasion; that wherein they glory, they may be found even as we.

For since this they sought earnestly, to find some handle against him, it is necessary to remove this also. For this is the one point on which they pique themselves. Therefore that they might not have any advantage whatever, it was necessary to set this right; for in other things they were inferior. For, as I have said, nothing does so edify worldly people as the receiving nothing from them. Therefore the devil in his craftiness dropped this bait especially, when desirous to injure them in other respects. But it appears to me that this even was in hypocrisy. And therefore he did not say, 'wherein they have well done,' but what? wherein they glory; which also was as jeering at their glorying; for they gloried also of that which they were not. But the man of noble spirit not only ought not to boast of what he has not, but not even of what he possesses; as this blessed saint was wont to do, as the patriarch Abraham did, saying, But I am earth and ashes. Genesis 18:27 For since he had no sins to speak of, but shone with good works; having run about in every direction and found no very great handle against himself, he betakes himself to his nature; and since the name of earth is in some way or other one of dignity, he added to it that of ashes. Wherefore also another says, Why is earth and ashes proud? Sirach 10:9

7. For tell me not of the bloom of the countenance, nor of the uplifted neck, nor of the mantle, and the horse, and the followers; but reflect where all these things do end, and put that to them. But and if you tell me of what appears to the eye, I too will tell you of things in pictures, brighter far than these. But as we do not admire those for their appearance, as seeing what their nature is, that all is clay; so therefore let us not these either, for these too are but clay. Yea rather, even before they are dissolved and become dust, show me this uplifted [neck] a prey to fever and gasping out life; and then will I discourse with you and will ask, What has become of all that profuse ornament? Whither has that crowd of flatterers vanished, that attendance of slaves, that abundance of wealth and possessions? What wind has visited and blown all away? Nay, even stretched upon the bier, he bears the tokens of that wealth and that pride; a splendid garment thrown over him, poor and rich following him forth, the assembled crowds breathing words of good omen. Surely this also is a very mockery; howbeit even this besides is presently proved naught, like a blossom that perishes. For when we have passed over the threshold of the city gates, and after having delivered over the body to the worms, return, I will ask you again, where is that vast crowd gone to? What has become of the clamor and uproar? Where are the torches? Where the bands of women? Are not these things, then, a dream? And what too has become of the shouts? Where are those many lips that cried, and bade him 'be of good cheer, for no man is immortal?' These things ought not now to be said to one that hears not, but when he made prey of others, when he was overreaching, then with a slight change should it have been said to him, 'Be not of good cheer, no man is immortal; hold in your madness, extinguish your lust;' but 'Be of good cheer' is for the injured party. For to chant such things over this man now, is but like men exulting over him and speaking irony; for he ought not for this now to be of good cheer, but to fear and tremble.

And if even this advice is now of no use to him since he has run his course, yet at least let those of the rich who labor under the same disease, and follow him to the tomb, hear it. For although beforehand through the intoxication of wealth, they have no such thing in mind, yet at that season when the sight of him that is laid out even confirms what is said, let them be sober, let them be instructed: reflecting that yet a little while and they will come that shall bear them away to that fearful account, and to suffer the penalty of their acts of rapacity and extortion. 'And what is this to the poor?' says one. Why, to many this also is a satisfaction, to see him that has wronged them punished. 'But to us it is no satisfaction, but the escaping

suffering ourselves.' I praise you exceedingly and approve of you in that you exult not over the calamities of others, but seek only your own safety. Come then, I will ensure you this also. For if we suffer evil at the hands of men, we cut off no small part of our debt by bearing what is done to us nobly. We receive therefore no injury; for God reckons the ill-treatment towards our debt, not according to the principle of justice but of His loving-kindness; and because He succored not him that suffered evil. 'Whence does this appear?' says one. The Jews once suffered evil at the hand of the Babylonians; and God did not prevent it: but they were carried away, children and women; yet afterwards did this captivity become a consolation to them in respect of their sins. Therefore He says to Isaiah, Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, you priests: speak unto the heart of Jerusalem, for she has received of the Lord's hand double for sins. Isaiah 40:1-2 And again; Grant us peace, for You have repaid us every thing. Isaiah 26:12, Septuagint And David says; Behold mine enemies, for they are multiplied; and forgive all my sins. Psalm 25:19 And when he bore with Shimei cursing him, he said, Let him alone, that the Lord may see my abasement, and requite me good for this day. 389 11, 12 For when He aids us not when we suffer wrong, then most of all are we advantaged; for He sets it to the account of our sins, if we bear it thankfully.

8. So that when you see a rich man plundering a poor, leave him that suffers wrong, and weep for the plunderer. For the one puts off filth, the other bedaubes himself with more filth. Such was the fate of Elisha's servant in the story of Naaman 2 Kings 5:20, etc. For though he took not by violence, yet he did a wrong; for to get money by deceit is a wrong. What then befell? With the wrong he received also the leprosy; and he that was wronged was benefited, but he that did the wrong received the greatest possible harm. The same happens now also in the case of the soul. And this is of so great force that often by itself it has propitiated God; yea though he who suffers evil be unworthy of aid; yet when he so suffers in excess, by this alone he draws God unto the forgiveness of himself, and to the punishment of him that did the wrong. Wherefore also God said of old to the heathen, I indeed delivered them over unto a few things, but they have set themselves on together unto evil things; Zechariah 1:15. Septuagint they shall suffer ills irremediable. For there is nothing, no, nothing, that does so much exasperate God as rapine and violence and extortion. And why forsooth? Because it is very easy to abstain from this sin. For here it is not any natural desire that perturbs the mind, but it arises from wilful negligence. How then does the Apostle call it, a root of evils. 1 Timothy 6:10 Why, I say so too, but this root is from us, and not from the nature of the things. And, if you will, let us make a comparison and see which is the more imperious, the desire of money or of beauty ; for that which shall be found to have struck down great men is the more difficult to master. Let us see then what great man the desire of money ever got possession of. Not one; only of exceeding pitiful and abject persons, Gehazi, Ahab, Judas, the priests of the Jews: but the desire for beauty overcame even the great prophet David. And this I say, not as extending forgiveness to those who are conquered by such a lust, but rather, as preparing them to be watchful. For when I have shown the strength of the passion, then, most especially, I show them to be deprived of every claim to forgiveness. For if indeed you had not known the wild beast, you would have this to take refuge in; but now, having known, yet falling into it, you will have no excuse. After him , it took possession of his son still more completely. And yet there was never man wiser than he, and all other virtue did he attain; still, however, he was seized so violently by this passion, that even in his vitals he received the wound. And the father indeed rose up again and renewed the struggle, and was crowned again; but the son showed nothing of the kind.

Therefore also Paul said, It is better to marry than to burn: 1 Corinthians 7:9 and Christ, He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Matthew 14:12 But concerning money He spoke not so, but, whoever has forsaken his goods shall receive an hundredfold. Matthew 14:29 'How then,' says one, 'did He say of the

rich, that they shall hardly obtain the kingdom.' Again implying their weakness of character; not the imperiousness of money, but their utter slavery. And this is evident also from the advice which Paul gave.

For from that lust he leads men quite away, saying, But they that desire to be rich fall into temptation; 1 Timothy 6:9 but in the case of the other not so; but having separated them for a season only, and that by consent, he advises to 'come together again' 1 Corinthians 7:5 For he feared the billows of lust lest they should occasion a grievous shipwreck. This passion is even more vehement than anger. For it is not possible to feel anger when there is nothing proving it, but a man cannot help desiring even when the face which moves to it is not seen.

Therefore this passion indeed He did not cut off altogether, but added the words, without a cause. Matthew 5:22 Nor again did He abolish all desire, but only that which is unlawful, for he says, Nevertheless, because of desires, let every man have his own wife. 1 Corinthians 7:2 But to lay up treasure He allowed not, either with cause or without. For those passions were implanted in our nature for a necessary end; desire, for the procreation of children, and anger, for the succor of the injured, but desire of money not so.

Therefore neither is the passion natural to us. So then if you are made captive by it, you will suffer so much the more the vilest punishment. Therefore surely, it is, that Paul, permitting even a second marriage, demands in the case of money great strictness, saying, Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? 1 Corinthians 6:7 And when treating of virginity, he says, I have no commandment, 1 Corinthians 7:25 and I speak this for your profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you; 1 Corinthians 7:35 but when his discourse is of money, he says, Having raiment and food, let us be therewith content. 1 Timothy 6:8 'How then is it,' says one, 'that by this, more than the other, are many overcome?'

Because they stand not so much on their guard against it as against lasciviousness and fornication; for if they had thought it equally dangerous, they would not, perhaps, have been made its captives. So also were those wretched virgins cast out of the bridechamber, because that, having struck down the great adversary, they were wounded by one weaker, and who was nothing. Matthew 25:1, etc. Besides this, one may say further, that if any, subduing lust, is overcome by money, often he does not in fact subdue lust, but has received from nature the gift of suffering no great uneasiness of that sort; for all are not equally inclined to it.

Knowing then these things, and revolving frequently with ourselves the example of the virgins, let us shun this evil wild beast. For if virginity profited them nothing, but after countless toils and labors they perished through the love of money, who shall deliver us if we fall into this passion? Wherefore I beseech you to do all you can, both that you be not taken captive by it, and that if taken, you continue not in captivity, but break asunder those hard bonds. For so shall we be able to secure a footing in heaven and to obtain the countless good things; whereunto may all we attain, through the grace and love towards men of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father, with the Holy Ghost, be glory, might, honor, now and for ever, and world without end. Amen.

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