

# 2 Corinthians 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.

## Analysis

**For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.** Paul insists that boasting in the paradise vision wouldn't be *aphron* (ἄφρων, "foolish")—because it's objectively true ("I will say the truth")—yet he **forbears** (*phaidomai*, φείδομαι, "I spare," "I refrain") precisely because factual boasting still produces wrong evaluation.

The pastoral wisdom is profound: even true claims can mislead if they cause people to **think of me above that which he seeth me to be**. Paul wants judgment based on observable reality—his ministry marked by suffering (11:23-29), his physical presence "weak" and speech "contemptible" (10:10). Spectacular past visions don't define present ministry; cruciform weakness does.

This verse strikes at Christian celebrity culture: Paul could legitimately promote his extraordinary experiences (they're true!), but refuses because it would create false impressions. Ministry credibility rests on what people see (observable fruit, Christlike character) and hear (gospel proclamation), not marketing mystical résumés.

## Historical Context

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Greco-Roman culture prized rhetorical self-promotion; philosophers and sophists built reputations on dramatic conversion stories and divine encounters. Paul's refusal to exploit his paradise vision—though it would "win" the argument with false apostles—demonstrates that gospel ministry operates by completely different values: humility, weakness, and transparent accountability to observable fruit rather than marketed credentials.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How can even truthful claims about spiritual experiences become "foolish" if they cause people to evaluate ministry by wrong standards?
2. What's the difference between credibility based on "what you see and hear" in present ministry versus credibility based on past dramatic experiences?
3. In what ways might contemporary Christian culture pressure leaders to "not forbear"—to market their spiritual experiences despite Paul's example?

## Interlinear Text

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ἐὰν	γὰρ	θελήσω	καυχήσασθαι	οὐκ	ἔσομαι	ἄφρων		
though	For	I would desire	to glory	not	I shall	a fool		
G1437	G1063	G2309	G2744	G3756	G2071	G878		
ἀλήθειαν	γὰρ	ἐρῶ·	φείδομαι	δέ	μή	τι	εἰς	ἐμὲ
the truth	For	I will say	now I forbear	but	lest	any man	of	me
G225	G1063	G2046	G5339	G1161	G3361	G5100	G1519	G1691
λογίσηται	ὑπὲρ	ὃ	βλέπει	με	ἢ	ἀκούει		
should think	above	that which	he seeth	me	to be or	that he heareth		
G3049	G5228	G3739	G991	G3165	G2228	G191		
τι	ἐξ	ἐμοῦ						
any man	G1537	me						
G5100		G1700						

## Additional Cross-References

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**2 Corinthians 11:16** (Parallel theme): I say again, Let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

**2 Corinthians 11:31** (Parallel theme): The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not.

**2 Corinthians 12:11** (Glory): I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing.