Introduction
Most people like to boast about something.
It is part of our human nature, but is that right?

In the church at Corinth, there were certain individuals who were doing some boasting. They thought they were “super-apostles”. They built themselves up and they looked down on Paul.
When we come to the topic of boasting, the Bible warns us to be cautious.

I. Improper boasting glorifies self.  
VERSES 7-12

In the older versions, it was called vain glory. We would call it pride or arrogance.
Improper boasting focuses on externals.

The false teachers said Paul was:
• Inconsistent in his plans.
• Unimpressive in his speech.
• Unimpressive in appearance.

“Paul was a man of middling size, and his hair was scanty, and his legs were a little crooked and his knees were projecting (or far apart); and he had large eyes and his eyebrows met, and his nose was somewhat long.”
The Acts of Paul and Thekla
Paul looked rather ordinary, but isn’t that the way God often works?

But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”
1 Samuel 16:7

A God Sized Vision by Collin Hansen and John Woodbridge

In the First Great Awakening in 1734-35, God used Jonathan Edwards to bring revival to New England. He was a brilliant theologian, but his style of preaching was to read his sermon manuscript and his voice was rather monotone. Edwards would call the series of revivals that came to New England “a surprising work of God.”

In the Businessman’s Revival of 1857-58, God used an ordinary businessman named Jeremiah Lanphier to spark a revival in New York City that would spread across the country. Lanphier had a novel idea. He invited businessmen to a lunch hour prayer meeting.

It is amazing what God can do through a man or woman who will give God the glory.
Improper boasting is self-commendatory. 
Verse 12
The false teachers came from the outside into Paul’s territory. They claimed special authority and boasted about their skills, rhetoric, visions, knowledge and even their honoraria. But they preached another Jesus and offered a different gospel. Paul called them ministers of Satan.

“In spiritual matters, self commendation is really self condemnation.”
Phillip Hughes
“Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else and not your own lips.” Proverbs 27:2

II. Proper boasting glorifies God. 
VERSES 13-18

Paul’s “boasting” was:
• In the authority Christ had given him as an apostle. Verse 8
• In what God had done in the field assigned to him. Verse 13
• In the Corinthians themselves. (3:1)
• In the Lord. Verses 17-18

This is what the LORD says:
“Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23-24

What we boast in, we put our trust in.

There are a lot of things people boast in:
• Beauty and appearance
• Wealth and possessions
• Strength and abilities
• Wisdom and intelligence
• Religiousness and morality
Apart from God, it is all vain glory and it will pass away, but the one who does the will of God lives forever. I John 2:15-17

Conclusion
What are we boasting in?
Where is our hope?
Who gets the credit in our life?
Are we glorifying our self or do we glorify the Lord?