

2 Corinthians 10

- Begin final section.
- Some textual critics think Paul's attitude switch is too abrupt, thus they consider this section a different letter from a different author.

10:1 – Paul is not exasperated, but appeals to them as Christ would. This appeal is not emotional, but finds its source in meekness and gentleness.

- Jesus called himself meek in Matt. 11:29
- Jesus said the meek were blessed in Matt. 5:5
- Paul urged other believers to show the same meekness in Phil. 4:5
- “meekness” is **prautes** – it indicates the humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself as patient submissiveness to offense, and is free from malice and not seeking revenge.
- “gentleness” is **epieikeia** – which means “fitting”, “suitable”, “reasonable”, “fair”. When used to refer to authorities (like the Apostle Paul or the Lord Jesus Christ) it indicates indulgence, equity, lenience combined with a humble, patient steadfastness which is able to submit to injustice, disgrace and maltreatment without hatred or malice by trusting God and doing what is right because of faith in the Truth and final results of gentleness.
- Meekness and Gentleness are NOT incompatible with decisive action, judgment of character, and rejection of misconduct, ill-will or destructive relationships.
- Note Jesus driving out the money changers in John 2:14
- Note Jesus words of judgment and separation in Matt. 23

Chrysostom even points out that the end of verse 1 is Paul echoing the false slander and accusation coming from his critics in Corinth.

- Paul will continue to contrast his human facility and inability with the almighty power of God that works through him when he proclaims the truth
- See weakness addressed originally in 1 Cor. 2:3
- Paul continues to express his weakness in 2 Cor. 11:21-12:10
- Paul's critics refer to him as a coward and a promise breaker (2 Cor. 1:12)

10:2

Paul reiterates and clarifies his statement in the previous verse.

Paul is asking the Corinthians to get themselves in line with God's way and the apostolic teaching.

If the Corinthian church does not respond Paul will be as bold in person as those mocking him say he is in his letters.

ESV: *“I beg of you that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I count on showing against some who suspect us of walking according to the flesh.”*

“Beg” – **deomai** – “I request” – meaning “to ask, to beg”

“Bold” – **tharreo** meaning “to be confident”. In this form means “to become courageous.”

“think we live by the standards of this world” (or, ESV, “suspect us of walking according to the flesh.”)

- “think” **logizomai** means “to reckon” meaning “toward those who judge”
- “world” or “flesh” is **sarka** – here it means “according to the fleshly principles”
- “living” or “walking” is **peripatountas** – “to walk, to walk about, to conduct one's life.”

10:3

ESV – “For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh.”

“We live in this world (flesh)” – refers to Paul living his life like every other man concerned about the things of this life, the powers of this age, the priorities of the carnal mind while subject to the laws and limitations of mere secular humanity.

“We do not wage war as the world does” –

“war” is **strateuometha** – from **strateuo** which means “to be a soldier, to serve as a soldier, often serving at their own expense.” This refers to the ministry, activity and struggles of Paul’s ministry.

Standards of world	Live in the world	Weapons of the world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians do not live by the world’s standards • Christians have a higher standard that is not established by the world’s system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christians do live in the world. • Christians do have to meet obligations, accept responsibility and participate the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The world’s weapons are against truth. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Force - Deception - Manipulation • The Christians weapons are from have Divine Power since their source is God’s Divine Nature: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Truth in thought and word - Righteous Behavior

10:4-5

- “weapons we fight with” –
 - “weapons” is **opla** – “weapon, instrument of warfare.” This is a very general word for both offensive and defensive weapons. The list of spiritual weapons in Ephesians 6 would fit this word.
 - “fight” is **strateias** – means “warfare, military expedition, campaign”
- “weapons of the world (**sarkika**)” – the weapons of the flesh or the common man
- Our weapons have “divine power” –
 - “powerful” is **dunata**
 - “of God” would indicate these weapons:
 - are employed on God’s behalf
 - have God’s personal interest involved
- Our weapons
 - “demolish strongholds” –
 - “demolish” is **kathairesin** meaning “overthrow”, “tearing down, pulling down, destroying.”
 - “strongholds” is **oxuromaton** meaning “stronghold, fortress.” In the papyri the word meant “prison”
 - “demolish arguments” –
 - “demolish” is **kathairountes** meaning “to tear down, to destroy”
 - “reasonings” is **logismous** meaning “calculation, reasoning, reflection, thought.”
 - “demolish...every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God” –
 - “pretension” or “high thing” is **upsoma** meaning
 - “rising up is **epairomenon** meaning that which is lifted high and exalted. The illustration created by this word is of walls and towers standing defiantly after they had been built.

- “knowledge” is **gnoseos** meaning
- “take captive every thought” –
 - “take captive” is **aichmalotizontes** meaning to take one captive with a spear, to bring into captivity, to bring into subjections. The present tense indicates a continual struggle and warfare.
 - “thought” is **noema** meaning “design, purpose, thought.”
- “make every thought obedient too Christ.” –

10:6 – “And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience once your obedience is complete.”

- Complete obedience would include:
 - 2:9 – separation from disobedient and rebels
 - 6:14-7:3 – reject false teachers and return to Paul’s apostolic message
- Punish disobedience is not as clear, but would likely follow the pattern of 1 Corinthians 5:1 – disassociation, expulsion, separation from the rebels, false teachers, etc.
- If the church wants to leave the apostolic teaching then Paul will let them go. But, if some people in the church see the error of their ways and want to return, then Paul will visit the church to strengthen and encourage the believers while exposing and driving off the wolves.

10:7 – “You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he.”

- Paul’s credibility as an apostle had been challenged. The criteria used by his critics was worldly and was “looking only on the surface of things.”
- Here we see the two sides:
 - False teachers and worldly philosophers who needed to undermine the Word of God and become critics of Paul’s authority
 - Paul, the Word of God and the apostolic authority that could bring salvation, renew the soul (mind) and build-up the body of Christ for service and eternal rewards.
- Paul encourages the testing of credentials in 13:2-3, but the worldly speakers criteria was far from adequate. Paul’s critics were impressed with outward performances (5:12)
- Apostolic credentials stated by Paul: 10:8; 11:23-28; 12:9-10; 12:12-15; 13:5-6

10:8 – “For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it.”

- Paul will develop this “boast somewhat freely” about his apostleship as these final chapters develop.
- “Pulling you down” – same word as 10:5, “kaithairesis” meaning “demolish”

10:9 – “I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters.”

- Paul does not want to intimidate (coheres, manipulate, use fear, etc.) to bring the Corinthians in line with the Truth.
- This is just as Jesus wants people to hear the Truth and believe with their own faith. Jesus is not trying to intimidate people into the kingdom. Force is NOT faith.

10:10 – “For some say, ‘His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.’”

- “weighty” means “burdensome”
- “forceful” means “vehement”
- “speaking” ability is considered “unrefined”, “crude” and “untrained” in 11:6

- “amounting to nothing” means “contemptable” and “crude words”
- The Corinthians dislike the message so they:
 - condemn the speaker
 - criticize the speakers ability

10:11 – “Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.”

10:12 – “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”

- “do not dare” means “are not bold enough”
- To compare God’s ministry to men’s entertainment or to evaluate the value of God’s message based on men’s response to that message means in the Greek “lack understanding.” In other words, if you are using this world to evaluate God’s Word then you just don’t get it.
- Paul is not going to compare himself with ministries who praise themselves and write their own testimonials which are used as marketing material.
- The false teachers set a false standard of evaluation, then they praise themselves when they meet the criteria for that false standard.
- Paul is both defending himself and attacking the false teachers.

10:13 – “We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.”

- When Paul does “boast” about the Corinthian church he is accurate since:
 - One, the Lord called Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Gal. 2:9)
 - Two, historically it was Paul who traveled to Corinth with the Gospel and started the Corinthian church
- The false teachers are encroaching on Paul’s church. Paul went to an unchristianized area to evangelize and start a church. Paul was not being unethical for trying to reestablish his authority after it had been taken by false teachers.
- Gal. 2:7-11 – The Jerusalem Council approved Paul’s ministry and Paul’s message into Gentile territory.

10:14 – “We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.”

- Paul is not going to piggyback on someone else’s work and ministry by staking a claim to what some other ministry or apostle has accomplished.
- Paul is not against “building on” another ministry (1 Cor. 3:5-23) or sharing spiritual gifts with other ministries (Romans 1:11-13). But, he is against claiming another man’s work as his own and trying to take over another man’s ministry. The false teachers were doing this to Paul in Corinth.
- The false-apostles where:
 - Encroaching on Paul’s territory
 - Ignoring Paul’s ministry that was recognized and approved by the Jerusalem Council (which included approval by apostles such as Peter, John and James, the brother of Jesus) (Gal. 2:6-11 and Acts 15:1-35)
- The false apostles had invaded Paul’s area of work and had destroyed Paul’s reputation in order to do so.

10:15 – Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that as your faith continues to grow, our area of activity among you will greatly expand,

- The false apostles and false teachers were bragging about work they had not done. If there was no Paul, the false teachers would have had to do something else such as teach philosophy, host motivational seminars, join a Pagan religious system, etc.
- The false-teachers could NOT have started the Corinthian church (or, any church)

10:16 – “so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we don’t not want to boast about work already done in another man’s territory.”

- The false apostles are the ones boasting about their “work” which was nothing more than destroying Paul’s work and character in order to take over.
- Paul purposely avoided working in another man’s territory.
- Paul avoiding established ministries is seen in Romans 15:17-23.
- Paul did expect that ministries would work together to “water” and “build on” each other’s work:
 - 1 Cor. 3:6 – “I planted to seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”
 - 1 Cor. 3:10 – “I laid the foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.”

10:17 – “But, ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’ ”

- True ministry is accomplished through the Lord and in the Lord’s way.

10:18 – “For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”

- True success is not determined by self or peers since they are not the one’s giving the assignment.
- True success is determined (and, rewarded) by the Lord.

Who were the false teachers?

1. Intruders from outside
 - a. Used letters of commendation (3:1)
 - b. Used self-commendation (10:12)
 - c. Invaded another man’s territory (10:13-14)
2. Claimed superior authority
 - a. Super-apostles (11:5)
 - b. Despised Paul
 - c. Ministers of Satan (11:13)
3. Judaizers
 - a. Knew Christ after the flesh indicates they came from Israel and Jerusalem (11:22)
 - b. Desired to restore Mosaic Law (3:6-8; 11:15)
4. Libertines (6:14-7:1; 12:21)
5. Philosophers (early Gnostics)
 - a. Philosophy vs God’s knowledge (10:5)
 - b. Fleshly wisdom (1:12)
 - c.
6. Seeking financial gain (11:7, 9; 12:13-18)