

# 2 Corinthians 10 Commentary

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)

**CLICK VERSE**

To go directly to that verse

- [10:1](#)
- [10:2](#)
- [10:3](#)
- [10:4](#)
- [10:5](#)
- [10:6](#)
- [10:7](#)
- [10:8](#)
- [10:9](#)
- [10:10](#)
- [10:11](#)
- [10:12](#)
- [10:13](#)
- [10:14](#)
- [10:15](#)
- [10:16](#)
- [10:17](#)
- [10:18](#)

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

Click chart to enlarge

Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

[A Third Chart](#)

## Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16 Character of Paul	2Co 8:1-9:15 Collection for the Saints	2Co 10:1-12:21 Credentials of Paul
<b>Testimonial &amp; Didactic</b>	<b>Practical</b>	<b>Apologetic</b>
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

## INTRODUCTIONS TO SECOND CORINTHIANS:

- **IRVING JENSEN** - [Introduction and study tips](#) - excellent preliminary resource - scroll to page 1877 (Notes on both 1-2 Cor begin on p 1829)
- **JOHN MACARTHUR** [2 Corinthians Introduction - same as in the Study Bible](#)
- **JAMES VAN DINE** [2 Corinthians - Author, Purpose, Outline, Argument](#)
- **CHARLES SWINDOLL** - [2 Corinthians Overview](#)
- **MARK SEIFRID** - [The Message of Second Corinthians: 2 Corinthians as the Legitimation of the Apostle](#)
- **J VERNON MCGEE** - [2 Corinthians Introduction](#)
- **DAN WALLACE** - [2 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#)
- **DAVID MALICK** - [An Introduction To Second Corinthians](#)

**2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!**

Plummer "Now this is an intensely personal matter. I, Paul, in all earnestness appeal to you by the meekness and unfailing fairness of Christ,—I, whom you accuse of grovelling when face to face with you, and of being fearlessly outspoken only when I am far away."

Amplified - NOW I myself, Paul, beseech you, by the gentleness and consideration of Christ [Himself; I] who [am] lowly enough [so they say] when among you face to face, but bold (fearless and outspoken) to you when [I am] absent from you!

Barclay - It is I Paul who call upon you—and I am doing it in the gentleness and the sweet reasonableness of Christ—I, who, as you say, am a poor creature when I am with you, but a man of courage when I am absent.

The Living Bible - I plead with you—yes, I, Paul—and I plead gently, as Christ himself would do. Yet some of you are saying, "Paul's letters are bold enough when he is far away, but when he gets here he will be afraid to raise his voice!"

Phillips Now I am going to appeal to you personally, by the gentleness and sympathy of Christ himself. Yes, I, Paul, the one who is "humble enough in our presence but outspoken when away from us"

NIV By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am

Kistemaker - I, Paul, personally appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am subservient among you when present in person but bold toward you when away

KJV 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:

NET 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, appeal to you personally by the meekness and gentleness of Christ (I who am meek when present among you, but am full of courage toward you when away!)-

BGT 2 Corinthians 10:1 Α τ ς δ ὃ γ Πα λος παρακαλ ῶ μ ς δι τ ς πρα ητος κα πεικει ας το Χριστο , ς κατ πρ σωπον μ ν ταπειν ς ν μ ν, π ν δ θαρρ ε ς μ ς·

NLT 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ-- though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold only when I write from far away.

ESV 2 Corinthians 10:1 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!--

NIV 2 Corinthians 10:1 By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you--I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away!

YLT 2 Corinthians 10:1 And I, Paul, myself, do call upon you -- through the meekness and gentleness of the Christ -- who in presence, indeed am humble among you, and being absent, have courage toward you,

ASV 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I Paul myself entreat you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I who in your presence am lowly among you, but being absent am of good courage toward you:

CSB 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, make a personal appeal to you by the gentleness and graciousness of Christ-- I who am humble among you in person but bold toward you when absent.

MIT 2 Corinthians 10:1 I, Paul, appeal to you in reference to myself in terms of the considerateness and courtesy of Christ. When among you, my image is that of one humbly reserved, but when away, it is as of one intrepidly resolute toward you.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

NRS 2 Corinthians 10:1 I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!--

NAB 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I myself, Paul, urge you through the gentleness and clemency of Christ, I who am humble when face to face with you, but brave toward you when absent,

NJB 2 Corinthians 10:1 I urge you by the gentleness and forbearance of Christ -- this is Paul now speaking personally-I, the one who is so humble when he is facing you but full of boldness at a distance.

GWN 2 Corinthians 10:1 I, Paul, make my appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ. I'm the one who is humble when I'm with you but forceful toward you when I'm not with you.

BBE 2 Corinthians 10:1 Now I, Paul, myself make request to you by the quiet and gentle behaviour of Christ, I who am poor in spirit when with you, but who say what is in my mind to you without fear when I am away from you:

- **I Paul:** 1Co 16:21,22 Ga 5:2 2Th 3:17 Philemon 1:9 Rev 1:9
- **urge:** 2Co 10:2 5:20 6:1 Ro 12:1 Eph 4:1 1Pe 2:11
- **by the meekness:** Ps 45:4 Isa 42:3,4 Zec 9:9 Mt 11:29 12:19,20 21:5 Ac 8:32 1Pe 2:22,23
- **I who am meek when face to face** 2Co 10:7,10
- **meek:** 2Co 10:10 11:30 12:5,7-9 13:4 1Co 2:3 4:10 Ga 4:13
- **bold:** 2Co 3:12 2Co 7:4 11:21 13:2,3 Ro 10:20 15:15
- [2 Corinthians 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Irving Jensen's Outline of Chapters 10-13 VINDICATION OF PAUL'S MINISTRY 2 Cor 10:1–13:14**

- Authority and Approval of a True Ministry 2Co 10:1–18
- True and False Apostles 2Co 11:1–15
- Credentials of a True Ministry 2Co 11:16–12:13
- "Prepare for My Visit" 2Co 12:14–13:14

#### **Warren Wiersbe's Outline - ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))**

- I Follow Christ's Example (10:1)
- I Use Spiritual Weapons (10:2–6)
- I Don't Judge by Appearance (10:7–11)
- I Let God Do the Commending (10:12–18)

#### **Related Passages:**

2Co 1:24+ Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

1 Corinthians 4:21 (PAUL'S RETICENCE TO USE A "ROD" ON THE CORINTHIANS) What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of **gentleness** ([prautes](#))?

Matthew 11:29+ (**CHRIST'S GENTLENESS**) "**Take** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) My yoke upon you and **learn** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from Me, for **I am gentle** ([praus](#) root of [prautes](#)) and **humble** ([tapeinos](#)) in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.

1 Peter 2:19-23+ (**RELATES TO PAUL'S UNJUST SUFFERING**) For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up ([hupophero](#)) under sorrows when suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? **But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor ([charis](#)) with God.** 21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,** 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; 23 and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

## **PAUL IMITATES CHRIST IN MEEKNESS AND IN ACCUSATION**

2Co 10:1 "**now**" marks a new subject where Paul defends his apostleship against false charges against him. Thus chapters 10-13 represent Paul's answers to the accusation of his enemies.

**Colin Kruse** has some interesting comments on Chapter 10-13. One needs to keep in mind that there is not full agreement among conservative commentaries on this last section of 2 Corinthians (some think it was a separate letter, even the "severe letter," etc) and the thoughts by Kruse are only one opinion to consider. Ultimately each reader must be a Berean (Acts 17:11+) regarding this final section. The reader will notice a marked change in tone when moving from chapters. 1–9 to chapters 10–13. In the former the tone is basically that of relief and comfort, of confidence in God and in the Corinthians, despite the fact Paul felt the need to explain his changed travel plans and stress the integrity of his ministry. The tone of the latter is very different. It is marked by [satire](#) and [sarcasm](#), spirited personal defense, reproach directed towards the Corinthians and bitter attack levelled at outsiders who have infiltrated and are now influencing the congregation. In chapters 10–13 Paul faces determined opposition. The opponents are Jewish Christians (**SOME CALL THEM [JUDAIZERS](#)**) who put themselves forward as apostles of Christ. They highly prized eloquent speech, displays of authority, visions and revelations, and the performance of mighty works as the signs of a true apostle....Seeing Paul being thus reinstated in the affections of the Corinthians, and his authority re-established among them (**ED: CHAPTERS 1-7 DESCRIBE RECONCILIATION**), the infiltrators mounted their own frontal attack against the validity and integrity of Paul's apostolate. They succeeded in winning over the Corinthian congregation to their point of view and getting them to submit to their authority. Paul, finding his authority usurped and his apostleship called into question, was forced, against his better judgment, to provide a strong personal defence and to mount a vigorous attack against his opponents. The crisis Paul faced in this situation was the most crucial in all his relationships with the Corinthians, and this fact colours both the tone and content of chapters 10–13. ([Online Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians - chapter 10](#))

**John MacArthur** addresses why in the final 4 chapters Paul's tone abruptly changes, and his language becomes strong, authoritative, and confrontational -- After founding the congregation and building it up for about twenty months (Acts 18:1–18), Paul left to minister elsewhere. Following his departure, word reached him that serious problems had arisen in the Corinthian assembly, motivating him to write a (noncanonical) letter to correct them (1Co 5:9+). Reports of further difficulties (1Co 1:11), as well as some questions about which the Corinthians wrote him (cf. 1Co 7:1), prompted Paul to write a second letter (1 Corinthians) to them. **Soon, however, an even greater problem arose. Self-styled false apostles invaded the Corinthian church, vigorously assaulting Paul's ministry, apostolic credentials, and character. They sought to destroy his reputation and set themselves up as the authoritative teachers, so the Corinthians would believe their damning lies.** Paul responded to the threat with a sternly worded letter, known as **the severe letter** (2Co 2:3–4+), which brought about the repentance of the majority in the Corinthian assembly. (The **severe letter**, like the letter Paul refers to in 1Corinthians 5:9+, was not included in Scripture, and the letters have never been found. They are known to have been written only by the apostle's references to them.)....(**ED: THINK ABOUT DR MACARTHUR'S COMMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF A VERY REAL AND DEADLY "SPIRITUAL WAR"**) To stamp out the last traces of the rebellion, the apostle launched a [search-and-destroy mission](#) to root out the remaining pockets of resistance at Corinth. His attack was two pronged. The preliminary bombardment, as it were, came in the last four chapters of this epistle; the final assault came when Paul visited Corinth a couple of months later (2Co 12:14; 13:1). The last section of this epistle, then, is addressed to the recalcitrant minority; namely, the false apostles and their remaining deluded followers. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Irving Jensen** entitles 2Co 10:1-18 **Authority and Approval of a True Ministry** and introduces this chapter with these comments - Paul devotes the remainder of his letter, beginning at 2Co 10:1, to vindicating his apostolic ministry. At one point in this section he states why such vindication is necessary: "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me" (2Co 13:3). Not all the Corinthians were guilty of such suspicion or antagonism. In fact, most of them were with Paul and were anxious to support his ministry in every way. (Read 2Co 7:16+ again.) The instigators of opposition were men from without the Corinthian fellowship (cf. 2Co 11:4) who were trying to lure some of those Christians away from their loyalties. As long as there was this thorn in the group, Paul would do everything he could to remove it and the festering that it threatened. The fact that four chapters (or 30 percent) of the entire epistle

are devoted to this theme tells us that Paul did not think lightly of this problem at Corinth. Besides this, we can understand the urgency of such an apologetic stand before the entire Christian world of the first century. A false gospel (2Co 11:4) as well as the true was being broadcast around the "world," and people were asking, "Who are the gospel's true ministers, and who are the false?" Paul's second letter to the Corinthians gave the answer not only to the church at Corinth but to people everywhere, of all time. As you study these four chapters, look especially for the credentials of a true witness for Christ in the work of the gospel. ([2 Corinthians - A Self-Study Guide](#))

Here is a summary of the accusations against Paul as deduced from Paul's own words...

1. that he was not a true apostle since he lacked credentials from the Jerusalem church
2. that his motives were insincere;
3. that his physical presence was so weak that he deserved no respect;
4. that his letters were bold but he would never back them up in person;
5. that his promises could not be depended upon.

**Alfred Plummer** comments that "Having with much tenderness and affection effected a complete reconciliation between himself and his rebellious converts at Corinth (Chapters 1–7), and having felt his way, with diffidence amounting almost to misgiving, to an urgent request for bountiful support to the collection for the poor Christians at Jerusalem (Chapters 8, 9), he now, without any explanation of the change of topic and tone, suddenly begins a **vehement assertion of his Apostolic authority as superior to that of those who oppose him, ending with something which is almost a declaration of war against those who shall have failed to submit when he pays his next visit to them, which will be soon.** ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Simon Kistemaker** - The tone in the last four chapters of this epistle differs from that of the first nine chapters. Now Paul is much more personal than in the first part, where he uses both the plural and the singular personal pronouns: **we** and **I**; **us** and **me**; **ours** and **mine**. In chapters 10–13 the **first person singular** is much more prominent than the plural pronoun. Even when Paul uses the plural pronoun in 2Co 10:1-11:6, he refers to himself, as is evident from, for instance, 2Co 10:3, 7, 11, 13. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Bruce Barton** - In the first nine chapters, Paul was careful to congratulate the Corinthians for their obedience to his latest directives (2Co 2:5-11; 2Co 7:2-15). The last four chapters, however, warn the Corinthians in no uncertain terms to reform their ways (2Co 10:6, 11; 13:2, 5). The first half of the letter uses diplomatic language (see 2Co 3:1; 5:12), while the second half contains scathing sarcasm (2Co 11:7-8, 19). Because of this drastic change in tone, some commentators have asserted that the last four chapters of 2 Corinthians are in reality the "severe letter" spoken of in 7:8 (see the introduction). Even though this theory has gained popularity, there are other ways to explain the differences in tone. First, Paul may have been using the time-honored strategy of complimenting a person before criticizing him or her. In 2 Corinthians, Paul first commended the Corinthians for their obedience to his recent instructions so they would be open to changing their behavior in other areas. The commendation would prepare them to accept the more harsh aspects of what he had to say: for example, the fact that on his next visit he would discipline those who oppose his authority (see 2 Corinthians 13:1-3). Another way to explain the change of tone is to assume that there was an extended pause in the writing of 2 Corinthians at 10:1. During this pause, Paul received distressing news of what was occurring in Corinth, and he appropriately addressed those issues with a more severe tone. ...Whatever the exact cause of Paul's change of tone in chapter 10, it is obvious that certain difficulties in the Corinthian church deserved a more harsh tone. Paul had already cautiously defended his authority (2Co 3:1-6), his ministry (2Co 5:19-21), and his integrity (8:20). He had already commended the Corinthians for their hospitality (2Co 7:13) and their eagerness to give (2Co 9:2). At this point in 2 Corinthians, Paul was ready to admonish the Corinthians to change their ways (2Co 11:3-4, 12-14; 13:5) ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

**Now (de) I, Paul, myself** (present tense - continually) **urge you** - [Plummer](#) paraphrases Paul's opening as "*Now this is an intensely personal matter.*" Using the phrase "**I, Paul**" he is making a very emphatically as he launches his defense. However, understand that he is not so much defending his own personal self as he is defending his role as God's appointed apostle. The content of Paul's urging begins in the following verse (2Co 10:2).

**The unique phrase "I, Paul"** - 8x - 2Co 10:1; Gal. 5:2; Eph 3:1; Col. 1:23; Col. 4:18; 1Th. 2:18; 2Th. 3:17; Philemon 1:19 So only rarely does Paul use his own name in a letter

**Barton** - Paul commonly identified himself at the beginning and the end of his letters (see 1Co 1:1;16:21; Cols 1:1; 4:18; 2Th 1:1;3:17). But he identified himself at this point in 2 Corinthians because his own reputation and the truth of what he preached were under attack. ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

**James Denney** comments that **I, Paul, myself** "is not only the grammatical subject of the sentence, but, if one may say so, the subject under consideration; it is the **very person whose authority is in dispute** who puts himself forward deliberately in this **authoritative way**". ([2 Corinthians 9](#))

**Alfred Plummer** The preceding topic (COLLECTIONS - 2Co 8-9) is now dropped and another one is begun. Three elements which are conspicuous in the four chapters find expression in these two introductory verses; (1) the strong personal feeling, (2) indignation at the **calumnies** of his opponents, and (3) the intimation that, if the opposition continues, he will not spare (WORDS AGAINST HIS OPPONENTS). ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Barton on urge** - Paul used the Greek verb *parakalo* for "plead" that officials within the Roman Empire, who had full authority to order and command, used to ask someone in a polite way to do something. By using this word, Paul was in no way conceding anything to his opponents: He did have the authority to command. Yet Paul consciously refused to exercise his authority in an overbearing manner. Instead of commanding, he asked. (Paul used this same strategy in 2:8; 6:1; 12:18; see also Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:13, 16; 16:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:1.) Because he refused to act authoritatively, his opponents accused him of being timid and cowardly....Following Christ's example, the apostle Paul, who possessed full authority from Jesus (2Co 2:17; 2Co 5:19), merely pleaded with the Corinthians. In this way, Paul was showing them Christ's gentleness and kindness. ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** suggests "These lies were being furthered by the false teachers who had visited Corinth and won over part of the church to their false doctrine, which was a mixture of Judaism and the Gospel (**Judaizers**). Paul was not merely answering critics; he was answering Satan himself (2Co 11:13–15). When Paul speaks of "boasting," it is with a touch of **sarcasm**. "Your favorite teachers like to **boast**," he said, "so I will try to win your love by doing some **boasting** of my own!" Of course, Paul's **boasting** was in the Lord (2Co 10:17) and not in himself. Here in chapter 10, Paul gives several answers to the accusation that his presence was weak while his letters were powerful. ([Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

If we keep in mind that Paul is preparing to write the most difficult words in either of the Corinthian letters (which is one reason some think this is the "severe letter." - [see John MacArthur's refutation of this theory](#)) it is notable that he begins with a Spirit energized spirit of **deference** and a Christ-like attitude.

**By the meekness (**prautēs**) and gentleness (**epieikeia**) of Christ (**Christos**)** - Paul will soon launch into *conflict* in chapters 10-14, but before he does he begins with *compassion*. (A good practice for leaders in conflict resolution). This passage makes it clear that Paul had taught the Corinthians about the character of Christ, since the Gospels were not yet written. In his first letter Paul had called for his readers "**Be** (**present imperative** see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me (cf [1 Peter 2:19ff](#)), just as I also am of Christ." (1Cor 11:1+) Now we see Paul imitating **the meekness and gentleness of Christ**. There is a longer discussion of **meekness** below but in essence it speaks of one who gently, patiently endures offences without bitterness or a desire for revenge. Only the Holy Spirit could energize such a Christ-like attitude (Gal 5:23+ - gentleness = **prautēs**), once again underscoring the important truth that Paul was a Spirit filled man (Eph 5:18+).

**Arnot** - The gentleness of Christ is the comeliest ornament that a Christian can wear.

**Colin Kruse on meekness** - Among the Greeks from classical times onwards **meekness** (*prautēs*) denoted a 'mild and gentle friendliness', a highly prized social virtue, and the opposite of brusqueness or sudden anger. It was regarded as virtuous to show mildness to one's own people and harshness to one's enemies. Mildness on the part of the judge meant sentencing offenders with more leniency than the law prescribed. The **meekness** to which Paul appeals is that exemplified in the life and ministry of Christ. His **meekness** was not a condescending softness by which the demands of God's law were lowered. He showed meekness when he dealt gently and compassionately with sinners, but without in any way minimizing their sin (cf. Mt 11:29). It is in the light of this meekness of Christ that the apostle makes his appeal. (Online [Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Hafemann** comments, 'Far from timidity, his [Christ's] "**meekness**" is his slowness to anger, far from lacking conviction, his "**gentleness**" is his forbearance, in contrast to being vindictive.' ([2 Corinthians: NIV Application Commentary](#))

**Meekness** could be described as moderation in regard to anger. Aristotle said *prautēs* is the middle standing between two extremes, getting angry without reason and not getting angry at all. Therefore, *prautēs* is getting angry at the right time, in the right measure, and for the right reason. **Prautēs** is not readily expressed in Eng. (since the term "meekness" suggests weakness), but it is a condition of mind and heart which demonstrates gentleness, not in weakness, but in power. It is a balance born in strength of character. It is the serenity and the power, not to be lead away by emotion, but to control emotion as right reason dictates. **Meekness** and weakness are not synonymous. But **meekness** simply says, "God, in this situation, You have a purpose. You're in control." God is sovereign, that He rules over all. And that in this situation, He has a purpose, and that purpose is to make you more like Christ. **Meekness** is seeing everything as coming from God and accepting it without murmuring and without disputing. The Greek word for **meekness** was used to describe a soothing wind, a healing medicine, and a colt that had been broken. In each instance, there is power: a wind can become a storm; too much medicine can kill; a horse can break loose. But this power is under control. The

meek person does not have to fly off the handle because he has everything under control. **Meekness** is not weakness or spinelessness, but rather the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it. The gentle person knows he is a sinner among sinners and is willing to suffer the burdens others' sin may impose on him. This gentleness can only be produced by the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22–23) and should mark the Christian's behavior at all times, even when restoring a sinning brother (Gal. 6:1), or defending the faith against attacks from unbelievers (2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Pet. 3:15). It is a grace wrought by the Holy Spirit, and its exercise is first and chiefly toward God. Being so, however, it is also shown toward men, even evil men, in the realization that their insults and injuries are His means of disciplining His sons.

**MacArthur** remarks on Paul's spirit of **gentleness** ([epieikeia](#)) noting that "When applied to those in authority, it means **'leniency'**" and describes those who graciously refuse to insist on the full measure of their legal rights." ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Plummer** on **meekness** ([prautes](#))...of **Christ** - That the Messiah would be [praus](#) (root of [prautes](#)) had been foretold (Zech. 9:9 - "lowly" in Lxx = [praus](#)), and He had proclaimed Himself to be so (Mt. 11:29+), and had declared the blessedness of those who are so (Mt 5:5+ - meek = Lxx = [praus](#)) (and He exemplified [praus](#) on the Cross in Luke 23:34+). The appeal reads somewhat strangely as a prelude to one of the most bitter and vehement paragraphs in the writings of St Paul. What follows reads rather like an echo of the wrath of the Lamb. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Lowery - Gentleness** ([epieikeia](#), "graciousness") is the active corollary to this meek disposition. This was the attitude in which Paul ministered, a spirit which could easily be construed as weakness and timidity by the world's standards. His opponents, the false apostles (2Co 11:13), acknowledged his "bark." In a letter (cf. 1Co. 4:19) and through a delegate like Titus, Paul appeared bold. But his "bite," they said, lacked teeth, at least by worldly standards. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**NET Note** has an interesting comment on **meekness and gentleness** - Or "leniency and clemency." D. Walker, "Paul's Offer of Leniency of Christ: Populist Ideology and Rhetoric in a Pauline Letter Fragment" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1998), argues for this alternative translation for three main reasons: (1) When the two Greek nouns [πραΰτης](#) and [πικειαια](#) ([prautēs](#) and [epieikeia](#)) are used together, 90% of the time the nuance is "leniency and clemency." (2) "**Leniency** and **clemency**" has a military connotation, which is precisely what appears in the following verses. (3) 2 Cor 10–13 speaks of Paul's sparing use of his authority, which points to the nuance of "leniency and clemency." ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Wiersbe** - The Corinthians loved to glory in men (1Co 3:21 and 1Co 4:6–7) and were "swept off their feet" by the [Judaizing](#) preachers from Palestine. Even though they were preaching a false doctrine (2Co 11:4) and taking advantage of the Christians (2Co 11:18–20), they were welcomed by the church and honored above Paul, who had founded the church and risked his life for it. "Paul is so weak!" these teachers said, as they lorded it over the church. "Follow us, because we display real power!" "If I am weak," Paul replied, "it is not weakness—it is the meekness of Christ" (see v. 1). Christ never "lorded it over" people; His power was exercised in meekness and humility. Meekness is not weakness; meekness is power under control, the ability to be angry at sin, yet willing to suffer abuse for the sake of Christ. Let's not make the mistake of judging after the outward appearance (2Co 10:7) and thinking that some "powerhouse preacher" is necessarily displaying the power of God. ([Ibid](#))

## **BOLD IN LETTERS TIMID IN PERSON**

**I who am meek** ([tapeinos](#)) **when face** ([prosopon](#)) **to face with you, but** (present tense - continually) **bold** ([tharrheo](#)) **toward you when absent!** - **Plummer** = "I, whom you accuse of grovelling when face to face with you, and of being fearlessly outspoken only when I am far away." **Message** - "I hear that I'm being painted as cringing and wishy-washy when I'm with you, but harsh and demanding when at a safe distance writing letters." The Greek word translated **meek** ([tapeinos](#)) is usually used in a positive sense in the NT but in this context it is used in the negative sense meaning servile, abject, subservient. And so Paul's adversaries took his Christ-like meekness and turned it against him claiming he was "[groveling](#)" when he was **face to face** with the Corinthians.

**Barton** - Paul's critics saw this as (**ED: PRESUMED**) duplicity and an indication that Paul truly didn't possess the spiritual authority he claimed. Chapters 10 through 13 are Paul's direct response to his critics in Corinth. ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** has a great comment noting that "The allegation that Paul was bold when absent but weak when present was a clever contrivance. Any way Paul answered could be twisted. If he reaffirmed his strength in his letters, or defended his meekness in their presence, he would seemingly confirm one of the false allegations. Therefore, to answer his opponents' charges, Paul shows in the closing section of this epistle how his life and words weld strength to weakness, proving that one can be a bold warrior for the truth, while at the same time compassionate." ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

---

COURSES in English composition teach us to avoid the use of the pronoun I as much as possible when we write. After all, it's neither good style nor good manners to make ourselves the center of attention.

But there are times when the softening of the pronoun I can be bad spiritual grammar. For example, it's easy and vague to say, "Our church suffers from apathy. We need a new devotion to the Lord." It's tougher to confess, "I suffer from apathy. I need greater devotion to the Lord."

The next time you're talking with friends about living for Christ, avoid using we or us when you point out how Christians can be more effective in serving Christ.

Too often we—oops! I mean I—have said, "We should be doing something more creative in our youth department." What a difference it would make if instead I had the courage to say "I've been too critical of our youth leaders. I should help lighten their load so they'll have more time to plan creative activities."

Starting a sentence with I may not be a good way to begin an essay, but it's a good way to begin a confession.—H W Robinson ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

---

### Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - GOD'S GENTLE FOLK 2. CORINTHIANS 10:1

There were two law lords, judges, who were dining with some other men one day. One was the son of a very rich man, Westbury. The other, St. Leonards, was the son of a poor man. During dinner, Westbury, who had the knack of saying bitter things, said, "Oh, by-the by, St. Leonards, what was your father?" "Well, my father was a barber." "A pity he didn't make you one." A few minutes later, St. Leonards turned to him and said, "What was your father, by-the-way?" "My father was a gentleman." "Ah, a pity he didn't make you one." Not every one who is rich and high-born is necessarily a gentleman, nor if he is well dressed.

Our Heavenly Father can make every one of His children His good gentlemen and gentlewomen. Andrew Marvell had a fine saying: "Jesus Christ was the first true gentleman that ever lived." And when that true Gentleman comes to dwell in our hearts, what a wonderful change He accomplishes.

Tennyson, of his friend Hallam, wrote:

"He bore without abuse  
The grand old name of gentleman."

The Lord Jesus can make us true gentlemen and gentlewomen.

---

**Urge** (appeal)(3874) **paraklesis** from **parakaleo** = beseech <> **pará** = side of + **kaléo** = call) has a basic meaning calling someone to oneself (a call for help) and here it describes a strong and persistent request, appeal or entreaty. It means to ask for something earnestly and with propriety.

**Meekness** (4240) **prautes** from **praus** = gentle) describes the quality of gentleness or meekness. It denotes the humble and gentle attitude which expresses itself, in particular, in a patient submissiveness to offense, free from malice and desire for revenge. It is the ability to bear reproaches and slights without bitterness and resentment, It indicates an obedient submissiveness to God's will, with unwavering faith and enduring patience displaying itself in a gentle attitude and kind acts toward others, and this often in the face of opposition. Ultimately prautes is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:23+ - gentleness = prautes). NT uses - 1Co 4:21; 2Co 10:1; Gal 5:23; Gal 6:1; Ep 4:2; Col. 3:12; 2Ti 2:25; Titus 3:2; Jas 1:21; Jas 3:13; 1Pe 3:15

**Gentleness** (1932)(**epieikeia** from **epieikes** seemly, equitable, yielding) refers to gentleness, reasonableness, fairness, equity, graciousness (2Co 10:1); as a commendable attribute for a ruler forbearance, clemency (Acts 24:4) **BDAG** has "the quality of making allowances despite facts that might suggest reason for a different reaction." Found only in Acts 24:4, 2Co 10:1.

It refers to one's mild and kind and gracious manner even in the face of those who come at him. It's a person who knows how to walk in the Spirit and the qualities of the Spirit are always there. It's a divine sense of timing is with this word "gentleness." They know when to confront, they know how much to confront, and they know how to go about confronting somebody. So it's totally the character of Christ. Once this character is in place what it will do is it produces a conduct that is responsible. Now conduct that is responsible is conduct that doesn't take matters into your own hands. (Barber)

**Meek** (humble)(5011) **tapeinos** means **low, not high, not rising far from the ground**. It speaks of one's condition as lowly or of low degree. It described what was considered base, common, unfit, and having little value. It pictures one brought low, as for example by grief. **Tapeinos** is descriptive particularly of attitude and social positions. Note that while most of the uses are positive (humility is a Christ-like attribute), the use in 2Co 10:1 is used in a negative or bad sense meaning servile, abject, subservient. All



NT uses - Mt. 11:29; Lk. 1:52; Rom. 12:16; 2 Co. 7:6; 2 Co. 10:1; Jas. 1:9; Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5

**Face** (presence, partial) (4383) **prosopon** from **pros** = towards + **ops** = eye, the part around the eye and so the face) means literally toward the eye or face. Of the face of Jesus transfigured (Mt 17:2), of His face spat in (Mt 26:67) and slapped (Mk 14:65). Most of the uses of **prosopon** refer to one's face ("toward the eye").

**Bold** (confident) (2292) **tharrheo** from **thársos** = boldness) means to display or have courage, an attitude of confidence or firmness of purpose in face of danger or testing. be courageous, have courage, be bold, be of good cheer. "To have certainty in a matter." (BDAG). 2 Co. 5:6; 2 Co. 5:8; 2 Co. 7:16; 2 Co. 10:1; 2 Co. 10:2; Heb. 13:6

**Christ** (5547) **Christos** from **chrío** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) describes one who has been anointed with oil, one who has been consecrated, symbolizing appointment to a task. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus. Hamilton suggests a fourfold significance to such anointing ("māshach," Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, 1:530): (1) separation unto God, (2) authorization by God, (3) divine enablement, and (4) the coming Deliverer. Uses in Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:3; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:6; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:12; 1 Co. 1:13; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Co. 2:2; 1 Co. 2:16; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 3:11; 1 Co. 3:23; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 4:10; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 5:7; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 6:15; 1 Co. 7:22; 1 Co. 8:6; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:21; 1 Co. 10:4; 1 Co. 10:16; 1 Co. 11:1; 1 Co. 11:3; 1 Co. 12:12; 1 Co. 12:27; 1 Co. 15:3; 1 Co. 15:12; 1 Co. 15:13; 1 Co. 15:14; 1 Co. 15:15; 1 Co. 15:16; 1 Co. 15:17; 1 Co. 15:18; 1 Co. 15:19; 1 Co. 15:20; 1 Co. 15:22; 1 Co. 15:23; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:57; 1 Co. 16:24; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:2; 2 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 1:5; 2 Co. 1:19; 2 Co. 1:21; 2 Co. 2:10; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 2:15; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 3:4; 2 Co. 3:14; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 5:10; 2 Co. 5:14; 2 Co. 5:16; 2 Co. 5:17; 2 Co. 5:18; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 5:20; 2 Co. 6:15; 2 Co. 8:9; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:1; 2 Co. 10:5; 2 Co. 10:7; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:2; 2 Co. 11:3; 2 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 11:13; 2 Co. 11:23; 2 Co. 12:2; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 12:10; 2 Co. 12:19; 2 Co. 13:3; 2 Co. 13:5; 2 Co. 13:14;

**2 Corinthians 10:2 I ask that when I am present I need not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh.**

Amplified - I entreat you when I do come [to you] that I may not [be driven to such] boldness as I intend to show toward those few who suspect us of acting according to the flesh [on the low level of worldly motives and as if invested with only human powers].

Barclay - It is my prayer that, when I do come to you, I may not have to be bold with that confidence with which I reckon that I can boldly face some who reckon that we direct our conduct by purely human motives.

Plummer - I pray you not to drive me, when I do come to you, to be fearlessly outspoken with the sure confidence with which I am persuaded that I can muster courage against certain persons who are persuaded that we think and act on worldly and carnal principles.

Kistemaker - I ask that when I come I need not be bold and have confidence with which I expect to be courageous against some who think that we conduct ourselves in a worldly manner.

Phillips - am begging you to make it unnecessary for me to be outspoken and stern in your presence. For I am afraid otherwise that I shall have to do some plain speaking to those of you who will persist in reckoning that our activities are on the purely human level.

KJV 2 Corinthians 10:2 But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

NET 2 Corinthians 10:2 now I ask that when I am present I may not have to be bold with the confidence that (I expect) I will dare to use against some who consider us to be behaving according to human standards.

BGT 2 Corinthians 10:2 ὁμοί ὅ τ μ παρ ν θαρρ σαι τ πεποιθ σει λογ ζομαι τολμ σαι π τινας το ς λογιζομ νους μ ς ς κατ σ ρκα περιπατο ντας.

NLT 2 Corinthians 10:2 Well, I am begging you now so that when I come I won't have to be bold with those who think we act from human motives.

ESV 2 Corinthians 10:2 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.

NIV 2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

YLT 2 Corinthians 10:2 and I beseech you, that, being present, I may not have courage, with the confidence with which I reckon to be bold against certain reckoning us as walking according to the flesh;

ASV 2 Corinthians 10:2 yea, I beseech you, that I may not when present show courage with the confidence wherewith I count to be bold against some, who count of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

CSB 2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I am present I will not need to be bold with the confidence by which I plan to challenge certain people who think we are behaving in an unspiritual way.

MIT 2 Corinthians 10:2 Please take note, I am contemplating expressing my blunt boldness of confidence as when not present and to dare to bring it boldly to bear upon some who opine that we have a flesh-oriented lifestyle.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 10:2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

NRS 2 Corinthians 10:2 I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards.

NAB 2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that, when present, I may not have to be brave with that confidence with which I intend to act boldly against some who consider us as acting according to the flesh.

NJB 2 Corinthians 10:2 Yes, my appeal to you is that I should not have to be bold when I am actually with you, or show the same self-assurance as I reckon to use when I am challenging those who reckon that we are guided by human motives.

GWN 2 Corinthians 10:2 I beg you that when I am with you I won't have to deal forcefully with you. I expect I will have to because some people think that we are only guided by human motives.

BBE 2 Corinthians 10:2 Yes, I make my request to you, so that when I am with you I may not have to make use of the authority which may be needed against some to whom we seem to be walking after the flesh.

- **that when I am present:** 2Co 12:20 2Co 13:2,10 1Co 4:19-21
- **we walked:** 2Co 11:9-13 12:13-19 Ro 8:1,5 Ga 5:16-25 Eph 2:2,3
- [2 Corinthians 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 12:20 (**PAUL'S FUTURE VISIT TO CORINTH**) For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;

2 Corinthians 13:10 (**PAUL'S FUTURE VISIT TO CORINTH**) For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

Romans 8:4-5+ (**WALKING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH**) so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk **according to the flesh** but according to the Spirit (cf Gal 5:16+). 5 For those who are **according to the flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16+ But I say, **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

**Plummer** translates it "I pray you not to drive me, when I do come to you, to be fearlessly outspoken with the sure confidence with which I am persuaded that I can muster courage against certain persons who are persuaded that we think and act on worldly and carnal principles." ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Paul Apple** entitles this verse "Don't Make Me Use the Big Stick"

Paul is speaking directly to the believers in Corinth and pleading with them to reassess what they have heard from his opponents about him.

I (present tense - continually) **ask** ([deomai](#) - plea, pray, beg) **that when I am present** ([pareimi](#)) I *need not be bold* ([tharrheo](#)) **with the confidence** ([pepothesis](#)) **with which I propose** ([logizomai](#)) **to be courageous** ([tolmao](#)) **against some, who regard**

([logizomai](#)) us as if we walked ([peripateo](#)) according to the flesh ([sarx](#) - kata sarka) - NLT - "Well, I am begging you now so that when I come I won't have to be bold with those who think we act from human motives." In 2Co 10:1 Paul had **urged** and now he uses the word **ask** ([deomai](#)) which conveys a sense of pleading. **Plummer** explains why Paul is "begging" them writing that "He beseeches them so to behave that he may be spared the distress of proving that he can be unflinching when he is face to face with them." **MacArthur** adds that "Because of his compassionate desire to spare the rebels, Paul called on them to repent."

**When I am present** alludes to the fact that Paul would be making another visit to Corinth (2Co 12:20+). Recall he has been accused of being wimpy when absent, but here Paul reverses that and is hopeful things can be set in order so that he would not be forced on arrival to show them he is fully capable of not just "severe" letters but stern words in their presence! He did not want to be bold (stern) but gentle and meek in their presences. Note Paul's play on the verb [logizomai](#) saying he would **propose** ([logizomai](#)) (to speak the truth) but they would **regard** ([logizomai](#)) (speaking false accusations).

The phrase **I propose to be courageous against some** is not so just the idea of courage but also the idea of being daring and acting without fear toward these smooth talkers regardless of threats they might make against him. Paul is saying he would be bold enough to defy danger or opposition.

**As if we walked according to the flesh** alludes to the accusations that he was living and conducting themselves (aka **"walk"**) according to the fallen, sinful [flesh](#) inherited from Adam, continually setting his mind on the things of the [flesh](#) (controlled by the sinful desires inherited from Adam) rather than setting his mind on the things of the Spirit (see Ro 8:5+). They were accusing Paul of being guided by worldly motives energized by natural powers. In fact as an apostle he had access to supernatural power and the allusion is that he may have to utilize his authority to demonstrate that he did not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit! As **MacArthur** says "The apostle pleaded with them not to force him to display the confrontive courage of which he was capable."

**Wiersbe** on **according to the flesh** - Simply because Paul did not use carnal methods and exert the power of a "strong personality," the believers thought he was a weakling! ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**P E Hughes** - Paul declares that those who walk according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, that is, their living is not centred in God but governed by self-interest. In our epistle he has already (2Co 1:17+ = "Or what I purpose, do I purpose **according to the flesh**") alluded to the accusation of his enemies that it was his custom to make plans "according to the flesh" (yet another link between the earlier part and these concluding chapters of the letter). Both there and here the integrity of the Apostle's character is impugned: he writes one thing and does another, and such a man is not merely inconsistent but thoroughly unreliable. This imputation Paul constantly repudiates. If necessity requires, they will find that his deed is as good as his word. But he takes no delight in being severe, and accordingly begs the Corinthians to ensure that, in expectation of his arrival, his personal integrity and apostolic authority are acknowledged by all. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**John Calvin** - It is the duty of a good pastor to draw his sheep on calmly and kindly, so that many suffer themselves to be governed, rather than to coerce them with violence. I acknowledge, indeed, that severity is sometimes necessary; but we must always set out with gentleness, and persevere in it, so long as the hearer shows himself tractable. Severity is the extreme remedy.... For as men should be drawn, as far as is in our power, rather than driven, so, when mildness proves to be ineffective with those who are hard and refractory, it then becomes necessary to resort to rigour; otherwise it will not be moderation, or impartiality, but culpable cowardice." (Quoted by P E Hughes in [The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#).)

**Wayne Barber** - Verse 2, "I ask that when I am present I may not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh." You see, the critics of Paul knew nothing about waking in the Spirit. You have to remember this: if somebody is coming at you they know nothing about walking in the Spirit. They regarded Paul as if he walked according to the flesh just like they did. They would be only too pleased if Paul would get in their face and be bold and take them down. Boy, that's strength, that's what the pagan world thinks is strength. Get in their face, man, make them wilt. That's a man there, that's a man! Paul said to the Corinthians who desperately wanted to see him vindicated, they wanted to see him come out and get in the face of those who criticized him in a war to be vindicated and Paul says to them, "Don't you dare push me into that situation. Don't you make me have to step forward and be bold when I come among you with your intent of showing me off as to the fact that I could be what they said I couldn't. Don't push me in that kind of situation." You say, "Why, Paul?" Well, Paul answers it. Because he says even though he lives in a body that is subject to that kind of behavior, just like he was before he got saved, he doesn't war according to that behavior anymore. I don't use those kinds of weapons anymore." That's not the way we deal with conflict and this is something for every one of us to learn. (Sermon)

**Barton** gives an excellent explanation of 2Co 10:2 - Here Paul explained why he was writing this letter. He was hoping and praying that when he came, everything would be in order in the church (see 2Co 13:7). Paul had already said that he wasn't writing to condemn them (see 2Co 7:3). Instead, he was writing so that when he came to Corinth, he wouldn't have to be bold. Paul didn't want to spend his time disciplining the errant members of the Corinthian church when he could be building them up and encouraging

them (see 2Co 13:10). This was the same reason that Paul had postponed his visit to Corinth in the first place (2Co 2:1-2). He wanted to give the Corinthians enough time to deal with the difficulties in their church on their own. Paul was acting like a wise and patient father, sensibly giving the Corinthians time and space to sort out what was right versus what was wrong, what was true versus what was false. Paul didn't leave them without guidance, however. He sent official representatives, such as Titus, with stern warnings (2Co 2:3-4). In the end, he wanted to give the Corinthians an opportunity to mature in the faith on their own. Second Corinthians was Paul's last warning to the church (see 2Co 13:1-5). Within short order, he was going to visit Corinth. Titus was traveling ahead to deliver this letter and prepare the Corinthians for Paul's visit (2Co 8:16-24). If the believers didn't resolve the disputes within their church (2Co 13:1) and punish those who persisted in sin (2Co 13:2) before Paul came, he would do it himself. Titus and the representatives from the Macedonian churches would act as witnesses to all that Paul would do (see 2Co 9:4). This verse also clearly identifies Paul's critics: some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. Apparently, Paul's opponents in Corinth were accusing him of making decisions and preaching according to worldly standards instead of God's holy standards. In the first chapter of 2 Corinthians, Paul had already defended his recent travel plans from just such an accusation (see 2Co 1:17). ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

---

**Ask** (beseech, request, pray) (1189) **deomai** from **deo** = to bind) means to ask for something with the sense of pleading, beseeching or begging. 2 Co. 5:20; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 10:2

**Present** (came, have come) (3918) **pareimi** from **pará** = near, with + **eimí** = to be) conveys the idea of a continually being beside another ("there were some present" - Lk 13:1-note, cp 1 Cor 5:3, 2 Cor 10:2,11, 11:9, 13:2, 10, Gal 4:18, 20). **TDNT** - General Meaning. 1. Presence. **páreimi** means "to be present" (persons or things), **parousía** denotes "active presence" (e.g., of representatives or troops, in person; cf. 2Cor. 10:10).

**Confidence** (4006) **pepoithesis** from **peitho** = to persuade, come to a settled conviction) means full persuasion and expresses a belief in someone or something to the point of placing one's trust or reliance in them - the idea is having been persuaded and remaining persuaded. It is a belief that one can rely on someone or something. The nuance of meaning depends on the context - it can mean confidence or trust in others (2Co 1:15), in God (Ep 3:12) or in oneself (i.e., self-confidence) (2Co 10:12).

**Propose** (3049) **logizomai** from **lógos** = reason, word, account) means to reckon, compute, calculate, to take into account, to deliberate, and to weigh. **Logizomai** refers to a process of careful study or reasoning which results in the arriving at a conclusion. **Logizomai** conveys the idea of calculating or estimating. **Logizomai** was a term frequently used in the business community of Paul's day and meant to impute (put to one's account) or credit to one's account.

**To be courageous** (5111) (**tolmao** from **tólma** = courage in turn from **tlao** = to sustain, support, endure) means to have courage, to be bold, to dare to do something. To be courageous enough to try or to do something. The idea is of being daring, of acting without fear regardless of the threats or consequences. **Louw-Nida** - "to be so bold as to challenge or defy possible danger or opposition." **BDAG** says **tolmao** means "to show boldness or resolution in the face of danger, opposition, or a problem." Matt. 22:46; Mk. 12:34; Mk. 15:43; Lk. 20:40; Jn. 21:12; Acts 5:13; Acts 7:32; Rom. 5:7; Rom. 15:18; 1 Co. 6:1; 2 Co. 10:2; 2 Co. 10:12; 2 Co. 11:21; Phil. 1:14; Jude 1:9

**Walked** (Behaved, Conducted) (4043) **peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk around (walk around in a complete circuit or full circle), to go here and there walking, to tread all around. The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21+). ([See Spurgeon's comments on what it means to walk](#)) Paul uses **peripateo** only in the metaphorical sense (32 times in his Epistles - see all the NT uses below) meaning to conduct one's life, to order one's behavior, to behave, to make one's way, to make due use of opportunities, to live or pass one's life (with a connotation of spending some time in a place), to walk with God in the complete circuit (course) of faith. **Uses in Corinthians** -- 1 Co. 3:3; 1 Co. 7:17; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 5:7; 2 Co. 10:2; 2 Co. 10:3; 2 Co. 12:18;

**Flesh** (4561) **sarx** is used 147 times in the NT (in table below click book title for uses of sarx). A simple definition of **sarx** is difficult because **sarx** has many nuances (e.g., some Greek lexicons list up to 11 definitions for **sarx**!). The diligent disciple must carefully observe the **context** of each use of **sarx** in order to accurately discern which nuance is intended. The range of meaning extends from the physical flesh (both human and animal), to the human body, to the entire person, and even to all humankind! **STRONG'S** Summarization = **1) flesh** (the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood) of both man and beasts **2) the body** 2a) the body of a man 2b) used of natural or physical origin, generation or relationship 2b1) born of natural generation 2c) the sensuous nature of man, "the animal nature" 2c1) without any suggestion of depravity 2c2) the animal nature with cravings which incite to sin 2c3) the physical nature of man as subject to suffering **3) a living creature** (because possessed of a body of flesh) whether man or beast **4) the flesh, denotes mere human nature**, the earthly nature of man apart from divine influence, and therefore prone to sin and opposed to God

---

Greek: [en sarki gar peripatountes \(PAPMPN\)](#) [ou kata sarka strateuometha \(1PPMI\)](#)

Plummer - True that it is in the world and in the flesh that we do think and act, but it is not on worldly and carnal principles that we conduct our campaign.

Amplified: For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: It is true that we live in a human body, but for all that we do not carry on our campaign with human motives and resources ([Westminster Press](#))

Berkley: For while we spend our life in a body of flesh, we do not war with carnal weapons.

ESV: For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ([ESV](#))

ICB: We do live in the world. But we do not fight in the same way that the world fights. ([ICB: Nelson](#))

KJV: For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

Moffatt: I do live in the flesh, but I do not make war as the flesh does;

Montgomery: Though I do walk on the low level of the flesh, I do not make war as the flesh does;

NET: For though we live as human beings, we do not wage war according to human standards; ([NET Bible](#))

NIV: For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NJB: For although we are human, it is not by human methods that we do battle. ([NJB](#))

NLT: We are human, but we don't wage war with human plans and methods. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NRSV: Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards;

Phillips: The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: It is true that I am an ordinary, weak human being, but I don't use human plans and methods to win my battles.

Weymouth: For, though we are still living in the world, it is no worldly warfare that we are waging.

Wuest: For, though we are ordering our behavior in the sphere, of human experience, not in accordance with mere human considerations are we waging warfare, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: for walking in the flesh, not according to the flesh do we war,

- **walk:** Ga 2:20 1Pe 4:1,2
- **we do not war according to the flesh:** 2Co 10:4 Ro 8:13 1Ti 1:18 2Ti 2:3,4 4:7 Heb 12:1
- [2 Corinthians 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [CLICK FOR MORE COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE](#)

## PAUL'S METHOD FOR WALKING AND WARRING

In light of the spiritual opposition in Corinth, Paul now begins to describe spiritual warfare, piling up "military (martial) figures—waging war (v. 3b), weapons, warfare, the destruction of strongholds (v. 4), destroying every obstacle (lit. 'every high thing', i.e. tower), taking captives (v. 5), and standing at the ready to punish disobedience (i.e. to court-martial) (v. 6)." (Kruse)

In these passages we learn that (1) The battle is spiritual, not physical, (2) The battlefield is our mind and our thought life. (3) The battle ultimately is over truth, the truth of God versus "truth" as man interprets and propounds it.

**Utley** - Paul uses a series of military metaphors to describe the daily struggle between the Christian and spiritual wickedness (cf. Ro 7:1-25; Ro 8:3-11). This spiritual wickedness is defined in v. 5 as human logic, wisdom, and argumentation against the gospel (cf. Ep 6:10-18). ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

**For (gar)** - term of explanation. He will explain why he does not walk and war according to the flesh (its [sinful nature](#)). Notice Paul's

clever play on the words of those who accused him of walking according to the [flesh](#). He addresses them with the declaration that he walks **in** the flesh (flesh and blood, like any human being), but not **according** to the (fallen) [flesh](#)!

Paul agrees he was in the flesh physically  
but not according to the flesh spiritually!

**Charles Hodges on for** (gar) - "This verse is linked either with the middle clause of the previous verse ("I am determined to be bold toward the opponents of the truth, for though I live in the world, I do not wage war as the world does"), or, as is often the case in Paul's letters, the for refers to a thought that is omitted: "Some think that I live as the world does—that is not true—for though I live in the world, I do not wage war as the world does." The latter seems the more natural and forcible. Paul did indeed live in the world; he was a man, and a mere man, not only having a body, but being subject to all the infirmities of human nature. But he did not wage war as the world does. What was human and worldly neither determined his conduct, nor was the ground of his confidence." ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

**Though we** (present tense - continually) **walk** ([peripateo](#)) **in the flesh** (en sarki) - **NLT** - "We are human, but we don't wage war with human plans and methods." In short, while believers walk as human beings, believers do not war as human beings. In the previous verse Paul alluded to the fact that his opponents accused him of walking in the flesh ([flesh](#) - the sinful nature). Now he says **we walk in the flesh** which is saying he walks (lives, conducts himself in the world) just like any man with all the difficulties and weaknesses characteristic of mankind.

**Walk** refers to how one orders his or her steps, and is [ametaphor](#) describing how we live or conduct our life. **Flesh** in this [context](#) refers to physical flesh ("flesh and blood"), but in this same sentence, the second use of **flesh** describes the evil nature ([flesh](#)) that indwells all men (because all inherit it from Adam Ro 5:12+). **Flesh** in this context is that ungodly nature **J I Packer** refers to as "*anti-God energy*". While believers are like all mankind, being only human, but unlike the rest of mankind, believers are not to fight spiritual war with natural human weapons, which are useless in spiritual warfare.

**Wayne Barber** - Paul says even though he lives in a body that is subject to that kind of (FLESHLY) behavior, just like he was before he got saved, he doesn't war according to that behavior anymore. I don't use those kinds of weapons anymore." That's not the way we deal with conflict and this is something for every one of us to learn. Paul knew something that I wish we all understood in the 21st century about being a believer. When you're in the midst of a conflict, the only confidence that is reliable is when you trust God, as you'll see in the message today, only Him, only Him, only Him and never trust the flesh. Because the flesh brings that damage and division and factions to the body like nothing else. We're in a war with our fleshly mindset and that mindset says, "Do things your way. Resolve the conflict your way, and according to the ways of the world." Evidently we're losing in that war. The pastors this year, they tell me there are more pastors resigning from the ministry because they've been chewed up, spit out by people than ever before. Churches are split everywhere. You could go to cities in the South: 800 and some churches, and 400 of them I think were split off from the others. You see Fellowship Baptist Church on this corner, Greater Fellowship than that Baptist Church, and then you see Boy, You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet Baptist Church. That's what you have because people in conflict choose to solve it their own way. They do it with the weapons of the flesh. They want to be vindicated as being right and that's what Paul is saying is exactly wrong. That is not the way we deal with conflict. That's what he says. The flesh has its weapons, get in your face, confront with boldness, even lie if you have to, but we don't fall into that trap when we walk surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ....Weapons of the flesh, is that the way we're going to deal with it? Or weapons of the Spirit? (Sermon)

**P E Hughes on in the flesh** - Paul, however, though he does not walk "**according to the flesh**", yet he does walk "**in the flesh**", that is, in the element of flesh, living his life, like every other man, subject to the laws and limitations which are common to human flesh. While, therefore, in this context the expression "**according to the flesh**" has a distinctively ethical connotation, in the phrase "**in the flesh**" the term "**flesh**" is used in a neutral sense to denote the medium of man's present corporeal existence; for the life lived by faith is still a life lived **in the flesh** (Gal. 2:20); it is in our mortal **flesh** that the victorious life of Jesus is manifested (2Co 4:11). In this latter sense the **flesh** is the equivalent of the frail earthen vessel which contains the divine glory (2Co 4:7), of our outward man which is decaying (2Co 4:16), and of the earthly house of our tabernacle which is dissolved in death (2Co 5:1). But for Paul to walk **according to the flesh** would have meant the contradiction at the very roots of his being of the power of the gospel which he preached and by which both he and the Corinthian converts had been saved and transformed. **Herein lies the danger and the subtlety of the charge that had been made against him.** The follower of Christ cannot allow his conduct to be controlled by the considerations of expediency and self-seeking which were characteristic of his unregenerate state, when he walked according to the flesh, not according to the Spirit (cf. Ro 8:4ff.; Gal. 5:16ff.). For the new man in Christ this principle "according to the flesh" is one of the old things that have passed away (2Co 5:17). **To revert to it is nothing less than an undoing of the gospel.** ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

## IS A WAR!

**We do not war** ([strateuomai](#)) **according to the flesh** ([sarx](#)) - Notice the word "not" (ou) which in Greek is the strongest way one can negate what follows. Paul is saying we absolutely **do not** wage **war according to the flesh** by trusting in and relying on the power of the natural man. Paul is speaking of waging **war** against accusations and insinuations made again by the false apostles, et al. Paul's point is that he would go to war with his spiritual opponents but would not resort to fleshly wisdom or human methods to carry out his "military campaign."

**THOUGHT** - Every believer could be well described by the old wartime saying "[You're in the Army Now!](#)" There are no exemptions, no deferrals, no [furloughs](#). For that matter, there is NEVER even a day off, and so there are none of those weekend "[Passes](#)" soldiers sought for a little "R&R." How many believers truly understand that our spiritual war is continual and because of their ignorance are frequent casualties of our three [inveterate](#), mortal enemies the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)? Yes, the victory has been won at the Cross over each of these enemies, and yet we all charged to continually "[fight \(present imperative see our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey\)](#) **the good fight of faith**" (1Ti 6:12+) for the glory of the Lord. Would you describe yourself as a good soldier of Christ Jesus (2Ti 2:3-4+)?

In Ephesians 6:12+ Paul describes the believer's warfare writing that "our struggle is **not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places." This passage begs the question - how could we possibly fight against spiritual forces with natural power? Of course, the answer is we absolutely cannot wage warfare in this manner and if we do, we will be soundly defeated! This begs another question - How critical is it for believers to be filled with and controlled by the Spirit if they are to wage spiritual warfare against unseen spiritual forces? Again the answer is obvious -- believers need the power of the Spirit to fight against "the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

**THOUGHT** - Are you experiencing frequent defeats in your spiritual battles? Do you even see them as spiritual battles? Jesus waged war against the epitome of evil spirits in His temptation by the devil in the wilderness (read Mt 4:1-11+, Luke 4:1-13+). He was fully God, but waged war as fully Man, a Man filled with the Word (memorization of passages in Deuteronomy) and filled with the Spirit and His power, and having put on the full armor of God, He successfully fended off the devil's repeated tempting attacks. In so doing he left every believer the pattern we too must follow/imitate, if we would be victorious over the invisible enemy. Are you letting the Word of Christ richly dwell within you, not just in your head, but in your heart (Col 3:16+)? Are you continually filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+)? These are God's provisions that alone will guarantee victory in our daily spiritual battles. The Holy Word and the Holy Spirit are a "unit" (cf Ep 6:17+) and you must be energized by both to be a fully equipped soldier of Christ. And beloved, the battles will be DAILY, because our enemy never takes a rest and never goes [AWOL](#) (like a lot of believers!)! Do not be deceived. Do not let your guard down. Do not become lazy and apathetic in this lifelong war.

**According to the flesh** - Here [flesh](#) refers to the evil disposition ([see note](#)). In other words, believers are not to fight this spiritual war in dependence upon "*anti-God energy*". They are not to fight in the spiritual, supernatural realm with fleshly, natural weapons energized by their old nature ([See Sin as the unbeliever's "Master"](#)). This is absolutely not the way to wage spiritual war. A spiritual battle requires spiritual weapons that can only come from God the Spirit. As noted above, believers must be continually filled, controlled, guided and governed by the Spirit (Ep 5:18+), continually walking in His power (Ga 5:16+, Ga 5:17+).

**Barton** - Worldly weapons-wealth, fame, and political might-may wield some power on this earth, but they are useless in spiritual battles. Trickery and deception may be effective in dealing with other people, but only truth will achieve success in the spiritual realm. Cynicism may protect a person from betrayal, but only faith in God will empower a believer in his or her spiritual struggles. A willingness to flout conventional morality might gain someone a following in this world, but only persistently following God's righteous ways will ensure victory in the spiritual realm. ([1 & 2 Corinthians Life Application Bible Commentary](#))

**Joseph Parker** (in his sermon on [2 Corinthians 10:4 Weapons of Warfare](#)) - The last idea that occurs to some professing Christians is that Christianity or that Christian life is a warfare. It has been noticed by observing and discerning persons that almost as soon as a man joins the Church he settles down into indifference or personal and selfish enjoyment,—as if a man should enlist into the army, and then go home and sit down all the rest of his days on the sunny side of his house and in the favourite spot in his garden. What kind of enlistment is that? Do you call that a soldierly spirit and a soldierly service? Whenever the idea of soldierliness took hold of Paul's imagination he elaborated the figure with marvellous energy....In addition to this the next mistake that is made is that persons who enter the Christian service imagine that all the fighting is to be done outside. You cannot fight outside until you have fought inside. The first man you have to kill is yourself....Are we at war? If the Church is not at war, it is unfaithful to Christ.

---

## Use Your Weapons

Above all, [take] the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. —Ephesians 6:16

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-20

Above all, [take] the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. -Ephesians 6:16

While visiting a museum, I was intrigued by a small inscription describing a class of Roman gladiators—the Retiarii—who fought using only a net and a trident. Of all the fearsome and lethal weapons available to those warriors, who often battled to the death, these men were given two items—a piece of webbing and a three-pronged spear. When they entered the arena, their survival depended on how well they used their weapons.

In the spiritual battle we face as Christians, God has chosen our weapons: “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds” (2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

It's worth pausing to look at ourselves in the mirror of Ephesians 6:10-18 to see if we are properly equipped with “the whole armor of God.” From the helmet of salvation to the shoes of the gospel of peace, we are to be protected and armed for a conflict that depends not on human strength but on the power of God.

When we realize the nature of that warfare and the forces against us, it's foolish to enter the fray with anything except our God-given weapons. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Does all the world seem against you  
And you're in the battle alone?  
It's often when you are most helpless  
That God's mighty power is known. -Anon.

Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. -Isaiah 40:31

---

## Sam Storms - Excursus on 2 Corinthians 10:3–5

The fact that we need a helmet for combat points to the urgency of guarding our minds/understanding/thinking/thoughts.

### 1. The Nature of our Weapons

a. NIV—“For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.” I.e., we live and minister in flesh and blood bodies, but we repudiate the standards and values of the world; we do not utilize its tactics/schemes to achieve our goals.

b. Our weapons have divine power, not human/worldly/fleshly power. Lit., dunata to theo, which can be taken one of four ways: 1) made powerful by God; 2) divinely or supernaturally powerful; 3) powerful in God's perspective; or 4) powerful for God. In any case, on any view, our weapons work! They are divinely effective. They get the job done because God works in/through them.

c. What are our weapons? Since our adversaries are spiritual, so, too, must our weapons be spiritual. E.g., truth, righteousness, faith, assurance of salvation, the Word of God, prayer, praise, etc. What are the world's weapons that Paul repudiates? Human ingenuity and wisdom, showmanship, flash, charm, powerfully persuasive personalities, eloquence devoid of the spirit.

### 2. The Purpose of Our Weapons

What can our weapons do?

a. They destroy “fortresses” (NASB) or “strongholds” (NIV). See Prov. 21:22 (the people in a city would build a sturdy outer wall for security; inside it they built a stronghold, a massively fortified tower to which they could retreat as a last line of defense).

b. To what do “fortresses/strongholds” refer? Verse 5 gives the answer: (1) “arguments” (NIV) or “speculations” (NASB) = lit., thoughts, plans, intentions. Cf. 2 Cor. 2:11; 4:4; Rom. 1:21; 1 Cor. 3:20. He is saying that his/our weapons “destroy the way people think, demolish their sinful thought patterns, the mental structures by which they live their lives in rebellion against God” (D. A. Carson); (2) “every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God” (NASB), “every pretension that sets itself up against the kingdom of God” (NIV). I.e., every arrogant claim, every haughty or prideful thought, every pompous act that forms a barrier to knowledge of God. I.e., every argument used to rationalize sin and unbelief and delay repentance.

In sum, our warfare is aimed at dismantling and tearing down the sinful reasoning and rationalizations which are strongholds by



which the mind fortifies itself against the gospel.

Arnold (Three Crucial Questions) argues that “the critical thrust of the passage is directed against christological heresy.... Therefore, in its original context, demolishing strongholds refers to changing wrong ideas about Christ in the minds of believers who have been influenced by demonically inspired teaching” (54–55).

c. “Taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,” i.e., ideas/notions/plans are taken over and transformed as they come into a new allegiance.

Two additional issues:

First, some have misinterpreted/misapplied this text as if it spoke of cosmic level spiritual warfare (i.e. territorial demons). “Strongholds” and “high and lofty things” have been taken as referring to demonic spirits. But the enemies in view are ideas and arguments and philosophies and excuses that are antithetical to the kingdom and glory of God.

Yet, again, who is behind these thoughts? Who inspires them? See Eph. 2:1–3; 4:17–19 “darkened” by whom); 2 Cor. 4:4 (how are they blinded if not by being deceived with philosophical and religious lies?); Acts 26:18; 1 Tim. 4:1–2.

Second, contextually Paul is talking about “strongholds” in the lives/minds of non-Christians. But do Christians have them too? Yes. Such intellectual/philosophical/moral enemies to the kingdom of God don’t automatically disappear when we get saved.

A stronghold is “a mindset impregnated with hopelessness that causes us to accept as unchangeable something we know is contrary to God’s will” (Silvoso). Or again, strongholds are negative patterns of thought that cripple our ability to obey God and thus breed feelings of guilt and despair.

They are burned into our minds either through repetition over time (such as occurs in an abusive, incestuous relationship) or through a one-time traumatic experience.

The solution is in experiencing the truth of Rom. 12:1–2 and Eph. 4:20–24. (1) Fill your mind with God’s Word (memorize Scripture). (2) Affirmations of your Christian identity. 3) Phil. 4:8. (4) Challenge every negative/destructive thought the instant it enters your mind; evaluate it in light of the Word. (see also [TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE FOR CHRIST \(2 COR. 10:4-6\)](#))

#### Other Related Articles by Sam Storms:

- [BOASTING, COMPARING, AND COMMENDING: A WARNING \(2 COR. 10:9-12\)](#)
- [Is all Boasting Bad? \(2 Cor 10:13-18\)](#)

---

**W W Dawley** - When the soldier enlists in his country’s army, he is furnished with uniform and arms.... So God arms His recruits, equipping them with both power and sword. Their business is to use to the best advantage what God bestows upon them. He gave Moses a rod, David a sling, Samson the jawbone of an ass, Shamgar an ox-goad, Esther beauty of person, Deborah the gift of poesy, Dorcas a needle, and Apollos an eloquent tongue, and to each the ability to use what each one had, and in so doing each one did most effective work for God. So He supplies each one of His disciples to-day with something that when used will make him useful in His kingdom, and to each man “to profit withal.” Let us use the weapon that God has given us and not sit down to pine for the instrument that He has bestowed upon another. The use of the weapon that we have will make us a success. The attempt to use another’s would make us a failure.

---

**ILLUSTRATION** - The battlefields of history are strewn with the wreckage of courageous, but ill-equipped, soldiers. At the famous battle of the Little Big Horn, George Armstrong Custer recklessly led his men against a much larger force of Sioux and Cheyenne warriors. In the ensuing battle his regiment was destroyed, and he and all 210 men under his immediate command killed. When the Nazi blitzkrieg rolled into Poland, a brigade of Polish cavalry gallantly, but foolishly, charged a formation of German tanks. The troopers’ lances and swords were no match for the panzers’ cannons and machine guns, and they were all slaughtered. - John MacArthur ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

---

**Brian Bell** - Moses had to learn that God’s weapons are spiritual! a) Remember Moses 1st warred after the flesh & “struck down the Egyptian”. 1 b) Later, God showed him how to war after the spirit & he watch Gods hand move against the heart of Pharaoh & the nation of Egypt, w/God’s signs & wonders...not Moses’!

---

**Ray Stedman** wisely reminds us that...

God has issued to each of us a bugle call to intelligent combat (cp our transfer from the power of Satan to God

- Col 1:12, 13-[note](#), Col 1:14-[note](#), Acts 26:18, 2Ti 2:3,4-[note](#), cp Heb 2:14,15-[note](#)). It is a call to us to be men and women of God, to fight the good fight (1Ti 1:18, 6:12, 1Ti 4:7-[note](#)), to stand fast in the faith, to be strong in the Lord in the midst of the battle, in the midst of this dark and evil world (cp Ro 13:11-[note](#), Ro 13:12-[note](#), Ro 13, 14-[note](#), 1Jn 5:19 [cp Lk 4:5, 6, 7], Ep 2:2-[note](#), Ep 2:3-[note](#)).

Those who ignore this call and the battle that rages around them (and "in" them 1Pe 2:11-[note](#), James 1:13,14,15-[note](#), Gal 5:17-[note](#)) are doomed to be casualties. We cannot remain neutral. We must choose sides. We must align ourselves with the forces of God, the forces of good. We must answer the bugle call, we must put on our armor and stand our ground or the battle will roll over us and in our defenseless, bewildered state, the forces of evil will trample us into the dust of the battlefield.

So we must learn to recognize how the dark systems of the devil work. But more than that, we must learn the processes of overcoming the systems of the devil not by flesh and blood, not by joining committees, not by political action, not by taking up clubs or assault weapons and attacking a human enemy. No, Paul says the weapons of our warfare are not flesh and blood weapons, not physical weapons, not political weapons. Rather, our weapons are mighty, through God, unto the pulling down of strongholds and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2Co 10:3, 4, 5). That is the path to victory! (See [Spiritual Warfare | RayStedman.org](#) 2Co 10:3-5 Exposition)

---

### **James Smith - OUR WARFARE 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3–7 (Handfuls of Purpose)**

The idea of warfare here is very emphatic. It is a bloodless struggle for the higher life. Being deserters from the camp of Satan, we must expect conflict, but greater is He that is for us.

I. Our Enemy. Our enemy consists of allied forces. There is—

1. THE FLESH, OR CARNAL MIND. "Though we walk in the flesh (body) we do not war after the flesh" (v. 3). "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." The carnal mind is a sworn enemy to the things of the Spirit. It is a rebel against the law of God (Rom. 8:7). The worldly mind is essentially opposed to the mind of the Spirit. To be carnally minded is death.

2. IMAGINATIONS. "Casting down imaginations" (v. 5). Those high-flying renegade thoughts that would carry us to the palace called vanity, and that seeks to put the crown of pride, upon our self-satisfaction. Such vain imaginings are dangerous to the soul's highest good (Psa. 2:1).

3. EVERY THING THAT EXALTEH ITSELF AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (v. 5). Every thought and feeling and act that springs up from a doubting heart against the word, the will, and the wisdom of God is vile presumption. Everything that is moral in the "old man" seeks to exalt itself. Beware of pride.

II. Our Weapons. The weapons of our warfare—

1. ARE NOT CARNAL (v. 4). They don't belong to the "old nature." They are not man-made. Not a product of human ingenuity. Spiritual enemies cannot be overcome by material weapons. We cannot overcome evil with evil. "Railing for railing" and such like are of the flesh and not of God.

2. THEY ARE MIGHTY THROUGH GOD. They are mighty because God's hand grips them, and that hand is almighty. These are His weapons for bringing down the "strongholds" of unbelief, sin, and Satan, and breaking the wings of our vain and lofty imaginations, and everything that would exalt itself "against the knowledge of God." This unbending and never-failing weapon is the "Word of God" in the hand of the Holy Spirit, for the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). With this weapon of His Truth, we are also, through faith, to be more than conquerors. "For the Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Like the sword of Goliath, "There is none like it. Give it me."

III. Our Victory

1. IS SURE. "The pulling down of strongholds" (v. 4). The first stronghold that has to be pulled down is our own self-will. This is the citadel of the carnal man. Here we have victory by surrendering to the Prince of Life. When our wills have been conquered by the subduing power of His mighty love, then we become partakers of the Divine nature, and are brought into league with Christ Himself, and so become, by His grace, victors over sin and the strongholds of Satan. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10).

2. IT IS TO BE COMPLETE. "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (v. 5). When a fort has been captured, then all that are in it are taken prisoners. Thoughts are fugitive things, and have to be watched and restrained, "for as a man thinketh, so is he." Thoughts constitute character. Pure thinking leads to noble action. They are the subtle weapons of life's warfare.

How important then it is that our thoughts should be brought into captivity to the will of Jesus Christ. Thoughts require mastering. Who can guide, sanctify, and use them as Christ can? Under His control they become weapons of triumph. Thoughts are difficult things to get hold of, but when captured by Christ, He will hold them for thoughts are captured when they are captivated. Like Rebekah, they say, "I will go with this Man" (Gen. 24:58). We can bring out thoughts into the captivity of obedience of Christ by keeping steadfastly "looking unto Jesus," who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Subduer of our wills, the Winner of our affections, the Captor of our thoughts, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. "What think ye of Christ?"

---

### **J Oswald Sanders - Warfare and Weapons 2 Corinthians 10:3-4**

Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses" (2 Corinthians 10:3-4 NASB). The reality of the spiritual battle, of which we are very aware on a daily basis, proves the existence of Satan. The fierceness of the fight demonstrates the power and tenacity of the foe.

The warfare is spiritual, not waged in the flesh but conducted on the spiritual level; this is in a different realm from where the unregenerate person lives. It is intangible warfare, not with physical weapons. We cannot seize people and drag them from Satan's grasp. We can reach and deliver them only through spiritual tactics. It is a battle of two armies with entirely different goals.

It is also interminable warfare. The war that began in Eden will end only when Satan is finally bound. In the meantime, he is struggling unceasingly to gain control of the world and its inhabitants. There is no escaping the effects of this warfare.

The battlefield is the human mind, in our imaginations and thoughts (v. 5). Battles always have their focal points, and this war is waged in the realm of our thoughts. Imagination, in this instance, means speculations apart from God for our own benefit. The imagination in this unhealthy sense is the source of a great deal of our sin. It conjures up wrong images and desires, and when the will entertains instead of rejects them, the citadel falls. Thoughts include our independent plans and purposes. The thoughts and purposes of the unregenerate man are contrary to those of God.

The invincible weapons at our disposal are the cross and the Word of Truth. "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony" (Revelation 12:11 KJV). We need to use them both in the power of the Spirit. (CC)

---

### **Henry Morris - Our Personal War**

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3).

A day over 60 years ago marked the entrance of our nation into the terrible World War II, the fading memories of which were recently stirred up by the dubious "Pearl Harbor" movie and then by the unspeakable attack on America on September 11, 2001. What this strange war on terrorism will bring in days to come we do not know, but we must trust in God and try to discern and follow His will, both nationally and individually.

For each of us is also in a perpetual spiritual war. In fact, the whole world system is at war with its Maker, and its commander-in-chief is Satan, the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul exhorts us to "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11) because, as Peter says, "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8).

This war we are in with Satan is not a war to be fought with bullets, or even with ballots. "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

At least a portion of this war must be fought and won daily within our own souls—and then we can do battle with Satan more effectively for the souls of those still deceived by him. Clad in God's spiritual armor (see Eph. 6:14-16), and wielding "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17-18), we indeed can each be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3).

---

### **Robert Morgan - Two Men, Two Martyrs**

April 27 belongs to two martyrs. They never knew one another, never met, and indeed, lived centuries apart. One was married on this day, then killed shortly afterward. The other marks this as the day of his death. The latter was a Christian named Pollio in the town of Gibalea (modern Vinkovce, Hungary). On April 27, 304 he was hauled before a judge who demanded his name. "Pollio," he said.

"Are you a Christian?"

“Yes.”

“What office do you hold?” Pollio replied that he was chief of the readers in his church, one whose duty it was to read God’s Word to the congregation. For that offense, Pollio was promptly burned to death.

Sixteen hundred years later, another Christian named Roy Orpin, a New Zealander, considered missionary service. He had been deeply moved by the martyrdom of John and Betty Stam in China. He went to Thailand, and there, on April 27, 1961, married an Englishwoman named Gillian. She was also a missionary in that country. At the reception the two sang a duet, the hymn “Calvary.”

The couple moved into a shanty in a Thai village and spent their first year of marriage amid growing danger. Violence was escalating in Southeast Asia. Gillian became pregnant, and Roy became afraid. “I had no peace,” he wrote friends, “until I remembered 2 Corinthians 10:5.” Gillian moved to a regional town having a missionary hospital while Roy stayed in the village of Bitter Bamboo to work with a small band of Christians. Suddenly three robbers appeared, demanded his valuables, and shot him.

He was taken to a government hospital, and Gillian rushed to his side. He lingered four days. His dying wish was for his wife to join him in singing a favorite hymn. The two lovers raised faltering voices and sang, “Jesus! I am resting, resting / In the joy of what Thou art; / I am finding out the greatness / Of thy loving heart.” Then Roy, age 26, passed away. They had been married less than 13 months. ([On This Day: 365 Amazing and Inspiring Stories](#))

---

**War** (4754) **strateuomai** from **strategos** = army, **stratos** = an encamped army) means literally to perform military service, serve as a soldier in the army, go to fight, carry on a military campaign, make a military expedition, lead soldiers to war or to battle. **Strateuomai** is used figuratively in this verse of spiritual battle (as used in 1Pe 2:11+) and means to carry on a campaign of spiritual warfare, planned and orchestrated by the indwelling enemy our fallen **flesh**, the evil disposition we inherited from Adam and which is still "latent" even in believers. NT uses - 7v - Lk. 3:14; 1Co. 9:7; 2Co. 10:3; 1Ti 1:18; 2Ti 2:4; Jas. 4:1; 1Pe 2:11

---

#### Related Resources:

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON EPHESIANS 6:10-18...

- [Ephesians 6:10](#)
- [Ephesians 6:11](#)
- [Ephesians 6:12](#)
- [Ephesians 6:13](#)
- [Ephesians 6:14](#)
- [Ephesians 6:15](#)
- [Ephesians 6:16](#)
- [Ephesians 6:17](#)
- [Ephesians 6:18](#)

EPHESIANS 6:10-18 BY WAYNE BARBER

- [Ephesians 6:10: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 1](#)
- [Ephesians 6:11: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 2](#)
- [Ephesians 6:14: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 3](#)
- [Ephesians 6:15,16 Spiritual Warfare, Pt 4](#)
- [Ephesians 6:17: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 5](#)
- [Ephesians 6:12,13 Spiritual Warfare, Pt 6](#)
- [Ephesians 6:18: Spiritual Warfare, Pt 7](#)

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON THE FALLEN FLESH

- [James 1:13](#)
- [James 1:14](#)
- [James 1:15](#)

VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON RESISTING THE ROARING LION

- [Exposition of 1Peter 5:8](#)

- [Exposition of 1 Peter 5:9](#)

## VERSE BY VERSE EXPOSITION ON THE BATTLE IN OUR MIND

### [2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Exposition](#)

## MISCELLANEOUS

- [Cyberhymnal Hymns on Topic of Spiritual Warfare](#) (scroll down)
- [2 Chronicles 20:1-25 Ambushing Satan with Song - John Piper](#)

## THE METAPHOR OF THE CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

- [Soldier Illustrations](#)
- [Exposition of 2 Timothy 2:3-4](#)
- [Three Kinds of Soldiers - Ten Principles of Warfare](#)
- [Roman Soldier by Edward Gibbon \(Decline & Fall of Roman Empire\)](#)
- [The Roman Soldier - Description from Jewish Historian Josephus](#)
- [A Few Soldier Stories and Sermons](#)

## THE AMALEKITES: A PICTURE OF PERSISTENT SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- [Jehovah Nissi: Exposition of Exodus 17:8-16](#) (See also commentary on Exodus 17)

**2 Corinthians 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.**

Greek: [ta gar hopla tes strateias hemon ou sarkika alla dunata to theo pros kathairesin ochuromaton](#) (Note: some translation place the following phrase in verse 4 - [kathairountes \(PAPMPN\) logismous](#))

Amplified: For the weapons of our warfare are not physical [weapons of flesh and blood], but they are mighty before God for the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: (for the weapons of our campaign are not merely human weapons, but God has made them powerful to destroy fortresses). ([Westminster Press](#))

Plummer - For the weapons of our campaign are not those of feeble human flesh. No, they are full of power, in God's service and with His blessing, for the demolition of the strongholds which defy His Gospel;

Berkley: for the weapons of our warfare are not physical, but they are powerful with God's help for the tearing down of fortresses,

ESV: For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ([ESV](#))

ICB: We fight with weapons that are different from those the world uses. Our weapons have power from God. These weapons can destroy the enemy's strong places. We destroy men's arguments. ([ICB: Nelson](#)) {Note: Places [kathairountes logismous](#) in v4 rather than v5}

KJV: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

Moffatt: the weapons of my warfare are not weapons of the flesh, but divinely strong to demolish fortresses—

Montgomery: for the weapons of my warfare are not weapons of the flesh, but mighty for God, in pulling down all fortresses.

NET: for the weapons of our warfare are not human weapons, but are made powerful by God for tearing down strongholds. We tear down arguments ([NET Bible](#)) {Note: Places [kathairountes logismous](#) in v4 rather than v5}

NIV: The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ([NIV - IBS](#))

NJB: The weapons with which we do battle are not those of human nature, but they have the power, in God's

cause, to demolish fortresses. It is ideas that we demolish, ([NJB](#)) {Note: Places [kathairountes logismous](#) in v4 rather than v5}

NLT: We use God's mighty weapons, not mere worldly weapons, to knock down the Devil's strongholds. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

NRSV: for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments {Note: Places [kathairountes logismous](#) in v4 rather than v5}

Phillips: The very weapons we use are not those of human warfare but powerful in God's warfare for the destruction of the enemy's strongholds. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

TLB: I use God's mighty weapons, not those made by men, to knock down the devil's strongholds.

Weymouth: The weapons with which we fight are not human weapons, but are mighty for God in overthrowing strong fortresses.

Wuest: for the weapons of our warfare are not human but mighty in God's sight, resulting in the demolition of fortresses, ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

Young's Literal: for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful to God for bringing down of strongholds,

- **the weapons:** 2Co 6:7 Ro 6:13 \*marg: Ro 13:12 Eph 6:13-18 1Th 5:8
- **of our warfare are not of the flesh:** 1Ti 1:18 2Ti 2:3
- **but divinely powerful :** 2Co 3:5 4:7 13:3,4 Jud 7:13-23 15:14-16 1Sa 17:45-50 Ps 110:2 Isa 41:14-16 Zec 4:6,7 Ac 7:22 1Co 1:18-24 2:5 2Co 13:3 Heb 11:32,33
- **for the destruction of fortresses:** Jos 6:20 Isa 30:25 Jer 1:10 Heb 11:30
- [2 Corinthians 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [CLICK FOR MORE COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE](#)

#### Related Resources:

2 Corinthians 6:6-7+ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

Ephesians 6:17+ And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE DEMANDS SPIRITUAL WEAPONS

Plummer's translation - For the weapons of our campaign are not those of feeble human flesh. No, they are full of power, in God's service and with His blessing, for the demolition of the strongholds which defy His Gospel; ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - This (2Co 10:3-5) reveals what spiritual warfare is all about. Because the Corinthians (led by the false teachers) judged Paul's ministry by the outward appearance, they completely missed the power that was there. They were evaluating things "according to the flesh" (2Cor. 10:2) and not according to the Spirit. The Judaizers, like some "great religious personalities" today, impressed the people with their overpowering abilities, their oratorical powers, and their "commendations" from church leaders. Paul took a different approach; for, though he was as human as anyone else, he did not depend on the human but on the divine, the spiritual weapons provided by the Lord. His warfare was not according to the flesh, because he was not fighting against flesh and blood (see Ep 6:10ff). You cannot fight spiritual battles with carnal weapons. ([The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**For** - Explaining what we do not war according to the flesh.

**The weapons ([hoplon](#)) of our warfare are not (ou-absolutely not) of the flesh ([sarx](#)), but divinely ([theos](#)) powerful ([dunatos](#)) for the destruction ([kathairesis](#)) of fortresses ([ochuroma](#) - NET = "arguments", NLT = "False arguments") - **Weapons** obviously refers to spiritual weapons, supernatural weapons supplied by the Spirit (cf Word and prayer - Eph 6:17-18+). The word for **warfare** ([strateia](#)) does not refer to a single [skirmish](#), a minor battle in war, but to a major **campaign** (see [military campaign](#)), in fact a life long campaign for Paul and for every believer! The only way to destroy enemy **fortresses** is by reliance on supernatural weaponry. Fleshly weapons are powerless against these formidable **fortresses**. Paul goes on in the next verse to define specifically what these **fortresses** are -- they are speculations, and in so doing he identifies the primary battlefield for this spiritual war.**

Never forget that your **mind** is the battleground!

**Arthur** writes "Satan knows if he can capture your mind, he can capture your body. Isn't this the purpose of brainwashing prisoners? Brainwash them, and you can do with them as you please! (This is illustrated strongly, by the way, in another good war movie, *The Manchurian Candidate*.) (As Silver Refined)

For as he thinks within himself, so he is.

Proverbs 23:7

**R Kent Hughes** on **fortresses** ([ochuroma](#)) (strongholds) - Every fortified city had strongholds, bulwarks that were particularly impregnable. "Strongholds" references the central arguments that fortify his opponents' message. Paul's gospel has "divine power" to demolish impregnable arguments. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness](#))

**Adrian Rogers** says the fortresses (strongholds in KJV) "These are walls of resistance which must be pulled down. There are strongholds of sin, arrogance, ignorance and despair. Inside these strongholds are the organized, mobilized, demonized forces of hell."

**P E Hughes** - The satanic forces against which the soldiers of Christ's army contend are not forces of flesh and blood; therefore to attempt to withstand them with weapons of the flesh would be nothing short of folly. The armour of Saul, though splendid in the eyes of men, cannot avail to overcome the Philistine giant. Only the panoply of God will serve for this purpose (Eph. 6:11ff.). Only spiritual weapons are divinely powerful for the overthrow of the fortresses of evil. This constitutes an admonition to the Church and particularly to her leaders, for the temptation is ever present to meet the challenge of the world, which is under the sway of the evil one, with the carnal weapons of this world—with human wisdom and philosophy, with the attractions of secular entertainment, with the display of massive organization. Not only do such weapons fail to make an impression on the strongholds of Satan, but a secularized Church is a Church which, having adopted the standards of the world, has ceased to fight and is herself overshadowed by the powers of darkness....And what precisely are these mighty weapons? They are the weapons, scorned by the world and yet most feared by the powers of darkness, of truth, righteousness, evangelism, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer, enumerated by Paul in Eph. 6:14ff. They are the very weapons which he wielded in the unremitting warfare that he was called upon to wage as Christ's apostle, which enabled him at last to testify that he had fought the good fight, and which won for him the victor's crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4:7f.). ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**Kruse on weapons** - Paul does not in this passage identify his weapons, but statements elsewhere in the Corinthian correspondence suggest they consist in the proclamation of the gospel, through which divine power is released (1 Co 1:17–25; 2:1–5; 2 Co 4:1–6; cf. Ro 1:16). ([Online Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians - chapter 10](#))

**Weapons** is that which is necessary to accomplish a task. It's a shovel if you're going to dig a hole. It's a pen if you're going to write a letter, but when it's used in a military sense as it is only two other times in the New Testament, it means weapons or armor that are necessary to defeat one in battle

**Divinely powerful** is more literally "mighty through God." Our weapons are mighty because they're from God. Some OT examples - the weapons of David vs. Goliath – sling shot and some stones, the weapons of Gideon, the weapons of Joshua – literally knocking down fortresses

**Wiersbe** - Moses had to learn that God's weapons are spiritual (Acts 7:20–36+) and Paul taught this principle in Eph. 6:10ff. The Word of God and prayer are the only effective weapons in this battle against Satan (Acts 6:4+). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Hodge** in explaining **fortresses** (strongholds) writes that "The opponents of the Gospel felt that they were so entrenched, so protected by the **fortresses** that they occupied, that they despised the ministers of Christ and derided their efforts. In what follows, the apostle tells us what these **strongholds** were. ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** on **fortresses** - That term would convey to the New Testament reader the thought of a formidable stronghold. Corinth, like most major cities in Greece, had an acropolis. Located on a mountain near the city, the acropolis was a fortified place into which the inhabitants could retreat when attacked. [Ochuroma](#) (fortresses) was also used in extra biblical Greek to refer to a prison. People under siege in a fortress were imprisoned there by the attacking forces. The word was also used to refer to a tomb. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Tony Evans** explains that "Paul says our spiritual weapons can destroy Satan's **fortresses**. Weapons such as prayer, reading the Word, obedience, meditation on Scripture, fasting, and service can blow up the devil's strongholds. And that's what we must do. These fortresses don't need to be remodeled. God doesn't tell us to capture them, change the locks, and use them for Him. Satan's fortresses must be torn down. ([The Battle is the Lord's : Waging Victorious Spiritual Warfare. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press](#))

**David Guzik** writes on **fortresses** (strongholds) explaining that "**Strongholds** (fortresses) in this context are wrong thoughts and perceptions, contradicting the true knowledge of God and the nature of God. These strongholds are expressed in arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. This reliance on carnal methods, and the habit of carnal thinking, is a true **stronghold**. It stubbornly sets down deep roots in the heart and mind, and colors all of our actions and thinking. It is hard to let go of the thinking that values the things and ways of this world, but God's power really can break down these strongholds...Praise God, **strongholds** can be pulled down! **Clarke** recounts with wonder one **stronghold** pulled down in history: *In like manner the doctrines of the reformation, mighty through God, pulled down or demolished and brought into captivity, the whole papal system; and instead of obedience to the pope, the pretended vicar of God upon the earth, obedience to Christ, as the sole almighty Head of the Church, was established, particularly in Great Britain, where it continues to prevail. Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!* Arguments and every **high thing** that exalts itself against the **knowledge of God**: Carnal, worldly ways of thinking and doing are arguments against the mind and methods of God. They want to debate God, saying they have a better way. They exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. They think of themselves as smarter, more sophisticated, more effective, more powerful than God's ways. Carnal, worldly minds think they know more than God does! We must remind ourselves that Paul is speaking to carnal, worldly thinking among Christians. He isn't talking about the world here, but the Corinthian Christians. They were the ones with the strongholds in their minds and hearts. They made the arguments against God's mind and methods. They held on to every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. We miss it entirely if we think the love of manipulation, the image of success, smooth words, the perception of power, lording over authority, and human schemes and programs are just problems with the world. Paul was dealing with this heart and mind in the church. For nothing is more opposed to the spiritual wisdom of God than the wisdom of the flesh, and nothing more opposed to His grace than man's natural ability. (John Calvin)([Commentary Notes](#))

Utley has an interesting note that "Romans was written from Corinth about this same time. He also mentions this warfare in Rom. 6:13 and Ro 13:12." ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

---

**Weapons**([3696](#)) **hoplon** originally described any tool or implement for preparing a thing and then became specialized to refer to items such as a ship's tackling, a cable, a rope or a tool of any kind (blacksmith tools, sickle, staff) and then in the plural was used for "weapons of warfare. And so the **instruments** we are to put at the service of God are **weapons** (Ro 6:13KJV) or implements of war, either offensive or defensive. **Wuest** notes that in classical Greek **hoplon** "referred to the weapons of the Greek soldier. Paul thinks of the members of the Christian's body as weapons to be used in the Christian warfare against evil. The saint, counting upon the fact that he has been disengaged from the evil nature, does two things, he refuses to allow it to reign as king in his life, and he stops putting his members at its disposal to be used as weapons of unrighteousness."

**Warfare** ([4752](#))(**strateia** from [strateuomai](#) = make war, serve as a soldier from *stratos* = an encamped army) a campaign, expedition, hence warfare, military service, a military expedition or campaign. Metaphorically of the apostolic office as connected with hardships, dangers, trials, a warfare. Only 2 times in NT = 2 Cor. 10:4; 1Ti 1:18

[Complete Biblical Library](#) - In classical Greek **strateia** is related to **strateuō**, "to war, serve as soldier," and denotes a "campaign, expedition," especially in a military sense. It only rarely describes the "army" itself (Liddell-Scott, cf. *stratia*). A more general definition of "military service" is also widely attested. Furthermore, a metaphoric application of *strateia* to "life" (either *bios* or *zōē*) is known (Moulton-Milligan).

**Septuagint Usage** By the time of the Septuagint there was little difference in usage between **strateia** and **stratia**. The Hebrew term *chayil* (e.g., Exodus 14:4, 9) along with *memshālāh* (only 2 Chronicles 32:9) and *maṣṣa'* (Numbers 10:28) infrequently become *strateia* in the Septuagint. Ordinarily *tsāvā'*, "military forces, campaigns, troops," stands behind *strateia*. Figuratively, the "starry host" (NIV) of the heavens may speak of the immense number of the stars; however, this is more likely an allusion to the "cosmic forces" (either "good" or "bad"; 1Kings 22:19 [LXX 3 Kings 22:19]) which are not to be worshiped (2 Chronicles 33:3, 5; Jeremiah 7:18 [no Hebrew]; 8:2; 19:13; Zephaniah 1:5). But it is God who has made these powers, and He rules over them (Nehemiah 9:6; Hosea 13:4, Septuagint). (Cf. the cosmic imagery of 4 Maccabees 4:10.)

**New Testament Usage** The connection between *strateia* and *stratia* continues into the New Testament (see e.g., 2 Corinthians 10:4). Probably there are two readings of *strateia* (2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Timothy 1:18) and two of *stratia* (Luke 2:13; Acts 7:42). (See the word study on *stratia* [4607].) Although the terms are formally different, they tend to share the same definition under many circumstances (see Bauerfeind, "strateia," Kittel, 7:702). Paul's usage in 2 Corinthians 10:4 is in keeping with the primary definition of "campaign": "the weapons of our campaign are not earthly" (author's translation) but the divine power of God. Since the context is not cosmic (cf. Ephesians 6:12), it is unnecessary to read into *strateia* any cosmic sense. The same holds true for 1 Timothy 1:18. As he elsewhere used military imagery (e.g., 2 Timothy 2:3), Paul was merely reminding Timothy to "wage the good campaign" (not "fight the good fight," a more athletic-sounding image [NIV]).



**Divinely** (2316) **theos** in the Biblical context refers to the supreme being described in the OT and amplified in the NT in Jesus, the Son of God.

**Powerful** (mighty, strong) (1415) (**dunatos** from **dunamai** = referring to power one has by virtue of inherent ability and resources; see study of **dunamis**) means powerful, able, strong. **Dunatos** (an attribute of God Himself, Ro 9:22-note, even a name of God - Lk 1:49) describes the character of the weapons available to all believer's -- our weapons have sufficient and necessary power, means, skill, and resources to accomplish the objective of tearing down strongholds.

**Destruction** (2506) (**kathairesis** from **kathaireo** = to take down) means literally a taking down, and so a demolition or destruction results. Obviously Paul uses **kathairesis** figuratively here to describe the tearing down of knowledge especially that which is anti-God or counter to what is presented by His Word of Truth.

**Complete Biblical Library** - In classical Greek **kathairesis** denotes the "tearing down" of buildings, walls, and fortresses. In some instances, including some papyri, it is used figuratively to describe the overthrow or destruction of the people (cf. Moulton-Milligan). The Septuagint uses it in Exodus 23:24 to describe the conquering of Canaan by the Jews, "But thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images."

The term occurs only three times in the New Testament. All three occurrences are used by Paul in 2 Corinthians. In 2 Corinthians 10:4 Paul prepared for "the pulling down of strong holds" of false teachers. Here, it means a "pulling down" or "tearing apart." But in 2 Corinthians 10:8 and 13:10 Paul was not wanting to destroy the Corinthians by abusing his authority. In these two references **kathairesis** denotes "destruction" or "extinction." (Cf. chapter 10:8, "... which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction"; 13:10, "... according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.")

**TDNT** on the verb **kathaireo** - This verb, found since Homer, has four main senses in secular Gk.: (1) "to take down from above" (objects, the yoke, the moon; hence the expression "to close the eyes of a dead person"; (2) "to tear down" (buildings, houses, walls (3) "to destroy," "to vanquish," "to extirpate," "to condemn" (opponents, cities, also figur. δόγματᾶ, βρῖν etc.; (4) "to kill"; d. "to dethrone"

**Fortresses** (3794) (**ochuroma** akin to **ochuroo** = to make firm) was used in secular Greek to describe a strong military installation, a bastion, or a fortified place **Vine** says **fortresses** speaks "of those things in which mere human confidence is imposed." The use of **ochuroma** in the Septuagint of **Proverbs 21:22** somewhat parallels Paul's use in 2Co 10 - "A wise man scales the city of the mighty, and brings down the **stronghold** (**ochuroma**) in which they trust."

---

#### David Jeremiah - SATAN IS DOOMED 2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

The ultimate victory has been won at Calvary, but it will be implemented in the future. The sentence has been passed, now it needs to be enforced. The enforcement is in the hands of the church. The tool that enforces Satan's defeat is the tool of prayer. the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:4–5). One person praying on earth can move angels in heaven.

Christians need to learn the power of prayer against Satan, for he will be defeated in his work. We are not engaged in the warfare if we are not praying against Satan. The judgment that was effected at the cross and is enforced through prayer will be completed. Satan is doomed. Satan is on a leash and he is only free on earth to the length of his chain. He cannot go beyond God's permission. But if we don't enforce his judgment in our own lives, we will be victims instead of victors. ([Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#))

---

**John MacArthur - Preventing Desire** - So many things in our evil society attempt to capture our attention: movies, television, books, music, clothing, advertisements, and now the Internet—all designed to capture the emotions. For example, advertising executives know that buying is ultimately an emotional decision. Few people know or even care about the mechanics of the car being advertised, yet they are impressed if it looks like a race car, or if a pretty girl is behind the wheel, or if other kinds of emotional bait are included in the ad.

We need to guard our minds, emotions, and wills. We need to seek God's will by meditating on His Word and letting His will become ours. An unprotected, uncontrolled, and unyielded mind is going to be filled with evil desires that will result in evil deeds. We must control how our emotions and minds respond to the tempting bait they encounter. ([Truth for Today: A Daily Touch of God's Grace](#))

---

**Rick Renner - Fortresses in you Mind** - Once while I was ministering in southern England, I had a few free hours between

services, so I asked the local church leaders to take me to see a famous old castle that was nearly one thousand years old. As I approached the castle, its tall, thick stone walls loomed upward overhead. After climbing to the top of the ancient tower, I stopped to enjoy a view of the entire valley below that was simply beautiful.

This particular castle was famous for its history because its lofty position on top of the small mountain had made it impenetrable for hundreds of years. Although many aggressors had attempted to attack and overtake it, its high position on top of the mountain, coupled with its tall, thick walls, had kept those who resided inside secure from outward attack. Over the years, enemies who tried to attack and conquer the fortress had been perpetually frustrated as a result of these advantages that prohibited such a victory.

As I stood in the top tower of that ancient fortress, looking down at the valley below and hearing the stories of all the foreign armies who had unsuccessfully tried to take this stronghold captive, I thought of Paul's words in Second Corinthians 10:4. He wrote, "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.)"

What are the "strongholds" Paul is talking about in this verse? Whatever they are, Paul lets us know that they are so reinforced and resistant that they can only be eradicated by the power of God and the weapons supplied by the Holy Spirit.

The word "stronghold" comes from the Greek word *ochuroma*. It is one of the oldest words in the New Testament, originally used to describe a fortress, such as the one described above. It depicted a fortress, a castle, or a citadel. Ancient fortresses had exceptionally thick, very high, impregnable walls that were designed to keep outsiders from scaling the walls or from breaking inside. Such walls were intended to keep intruders outside.

But by the time of the New Testament, the word *ochuroma* also came to be the very same Greek word used to describe a prison. Since the most secure, highly guarded prisons were usually constructed deep inside such fortresses, it makes sense that the word for a fortress or stronghold is the same identical Greek word used to picture a prison. Whereas a fortress keeps outsiders from getting in, a prison keeps insiders from getting out. Prisons are places of detention or holding tanks. They also have fortified walls, as well as bars of steel, that are designed to hold a prisoner in captivity.

The "strongholds" Paul refers to are lies that the devil has ingrained so deeply in your mind and in your belief system that they now exert power over certain areas of your life. Just as ancient rulers liked to build their castles perched high on a mountainside, the devil attempts to build strong lies in your mind so he can rule you from a lofty position in your thoughts and emotions. Although you may know logically that the lies the enemy speaks to your mind are untrue, these lies still wage war in your soul, attempting to sabotage your sense of self-worth and your self-image.

You see, when a person has a stronghold in his mind or emotions, he has thick, invisible walls around him that act like both a fortress and a prison in his life. Like the walls of a fortress, these lies insulate him from people who may try to break in to help him see the truth. Although others may want to help this person, they often find it impossible to break through the invisible barriers that surround his mind and emotions.

As a result, the person under mental and emotional assault is held captive like a prisoner to those lies. He sits behind mental and emotional bars, viewing life through the illusion of bondage that Satan has put into his mind. He looks at others, sadly wishing he could be free like them, not realizing that he has already been set free by the blood of Jesus Christ. The lies that operate in his soul keep him bound in an inner "prison" that he can't seem to break out of by himself.

So when you read Paul's words about "strongholds" in Second Corinthians 10:4, you need to picture both a fortress and a prison in your mind and then apply this picture to your own life. Are there any areas of your mind that are currently controlled by the enemy's lies of fear, doubt, and worry? Do you find yourself being repeatedly attacked in the areas of your self-worth and self-image? Are these attacks debilitating and crippling? Do you feel like a hostage to these areas of your mind and emotions? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you have probably allowed the devil to build strongholds in your mind and emotions that are hindering you from stepping out to do something God has purposed for you to do in your life.

If that's your situation, first recognize and repent for permitting those strongholds to develop in the first place. Then go back and see how the devil gained this foothold in your life. After you discover how the devil was able to work so deeply in your mind and emotions, ask the Lord to forgive you and to cleanse you from this devilish operation in your soul.

Once you have received this divine cleansing, it is time for you to arise in the power of the Spirit with the weapons of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Reject the devil's claim on your mind and emotions, and command him to leave in Jesus' name! Then get back on the path to right believing and right thinking by renewing your mind daily with the Word of God. If you truly want to be permanently set free from the lies that have controlled you for so long, you will have to use the weapons of the Spirit to pull down every stronghold the devil has erected in your life! ([Sparkling Gems From The Greek](#))

“The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity” (Ps. 94:11). “I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love” (Ps. 119:113). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:7). Jesus warned, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19). “The weapons of our warfare are ... mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ... bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. 10:4b–5b). “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, ... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

---

### MacArthur - [Drawing Near](#)

Keep your spiritual armor on at all times.

Every battle has an offensive and defensive strategy. Paul outlines the Christian’s offensive strategy in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5: “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

Our defensive strategy is to rely on Christ’s strength and put on our spiritual armor (Eph. 6:10–11). Paul was probably chained to a Roman soldier when he wrote to the Ephesians; so he had a ready illustration of spiritual armament at hand. But unlike Roman soldiers, who removed their armor when off-duty, Christians must remain fully protected at all times. That thought is captured in the Greek word translated “put on” in Ephesians 6:11, which carries the idea of permanence—putting it on once and for all.

“Stand firm” in verse 11 translates a military term that speaks of holding your ground while under attack. When properly employed, your spiritual armor serves as a lifelong companion that enables you to fight against the forces of evil and to do so without retreat. Just as Jesus personally instructed the churches in Thyatira and Philadelphia to hold fast until He returns (Rev. 2:25; 3:11), so He also instructs us to stand our ground without wavering.

Similar New Testament exhortations call us to hold fast to Biblical truth (1 Cor. 15:2), to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21), to our confidence in Christ (Heb. 3:6), and to our confession of faith (Heb. 4:14). Those are marks of a strong and stable believer against whom the schemes of Satan have little effect.

---

**David Guzik** ([ref](#)) has some excellent comments on this section writing that...

The carnal (Ed: Pertaining to flesh; fleshly; sensual; opposed to spiritual; describes that which is like the natural, unregenerate state) weapons Paul refuses were not material weapons like swords and spears. The carnal weapons he renounced were the manipulative and deceitful ways his opponents used. Paul would not defend his apostolic credentials with the carnal weapons others might use.

In Ephesians 6 (see notes Eph 6:10ff), Paul lists the kind of spiritual weapons he did use: the belt of truth (Eph 6:14), the breastplate of righteousness (Eph 6:14), the shoes of the gospel (Eph 6:15), the shield of faith (Eph 6:16), the helmet of salvation (Eph 6:17), and the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17). To rely on these weapons took faith in God instead of carnal methods. But truly, these weapons are mighty in God for pulling down strongholds!

The Corinthian Christians tended to rely on and admire carnal weapons for the Christian battle.

- Instead of the belt of truth, they fought with manipulation.
- Instead of the breastplate of righteousness, they fought with the image of success.
- Instead of the shoes of the gospel, they fought with smooth words.
- Instead of the shield of faith, they fought with the perception of power.
- Instead of the helmet of salvation, they fought with lording over authority.
- Instead of the sword of the Spirit, they fought with human schemes and programs.

Jesus relied on spiritual weapons when He fought for our salvation. Philippians 2:6,7-note, Php 2:8-note describes this:

“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

This kind of victory through humble obedience (cp 1Sa 15:22, 23, Lk 1:52, 18:14, 14:11, James 4:6-note, 1Pe 5:5-note, 2Co 12:9-note, 2Co 12:10-note) offended the Corinthian Christians because it seemed so “weak.” The carnal, human way is to overpower and dominate and manipulate and out-manuever. The spiritual, Jesus-way is to humble yourself, die to yourself (Mark 8:34, “daily”

Lk 9:23), and let God show His resurrection power (Php 3:10-note) through you. Our spiritual weapons are scorned by the world, but feared by demonic powers. When we fight with truth, righteousness, evangelism, faith, salvation, the Word of God, and prayer, no principality or power can stand against us.

"As the spittle that comes out of a man's mouth slayeth serpents, so doth that which proceedeth out of the mouths of God's faithful ministers quell and kill evil imaginations, carnal reasonings, which are the legion of domestic devils, that hold near intelligence with the old serpent." (Guzik comments -- "A wonderful observation by John Trapp; if I only knew what he meant!"). ([Reference](#))

**Ed comment:** In an attempt to explain Trapp's remark I searched the web and here is a related entry - "I certify that I have many times killed serpents by moistening in a slight degree, with my spittle, a stick or a stone, and giving them a slight blow on the middle of the body, scarcely sufficient to produce a small contusion. January 19, 1757. Figuiet, Surgeon." The above surgeon having given me this certificate, two witnesses, who had seen him kill serpents in this manner, attested what they had beheld. Notwithstanding, I wished to behold the thing myself; for I confess that, in various parts of these queries, I have taken St. Thomas of Didymus for my patron saint, who always insisted on an examination with his own hands. For eighteen hundred years this opinion has been perpetuated among the people, and it might possibly be even eighteen thousand years old, if Genesis had not supplied us with the precise date of our enmity to this reptile. It may be asserted that if Eve had spit on the serpent when he took his place at her ear, a world of evil would have been spared human nature.

Lucretius, in his fourth book, alludes to this manner of killing serpents as very well known: Spit on a serpent, and his vigor flies, He straight devours himself, and quickly dies. (Further comment: I would not recommend this method if confronted by a venomous reptile, spiritually speaking or real. In the former I would suggest James 4:7-note, 1Pe 5:9-note. In the latter I would suggest your legs and feet be quickly mobilized) ([Reference](#))

---

**Illustration of divinely powerful weapons** - The story of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's conversion to Christ in a Siberian prison camp is a remarkable testimony to the truth of today's text. Solzhenitsyn was being examined one day by a fellow prisoner, a Jewish physician who had been won to Christ by the example of another prisoner. Noticing the misery in Solzhenitsyn's eyes, the doctor told him his story, including his faith in Christ. Solzhenitsyn came to faith through the doctor's testimony and survived to tell the world about the power of the spirit over human evil. What an incredible example of waging war by the weapons of the Holy Spirit! When His people call on Him, no prison or army can lock out the Word and the power of God....Paul is saying that although we live in human bodies, we don't wage war according to human standards. Our weapons are those of the Spirit, so they have His power behind them. These are the only weapons great enough to bring down ""strongholds." What is a stronghold? Moody Press author Jim Logan, in his book [Reclaiming Surrendered Ground](#), explains that strongholds are the fortresses Satan builds in our lives when we give him a foothold, a piece of ground on which to build. How does Satan gain a foothold in our hearts and minds? We give him ground when we sin and refuse to forsake our sin or when we believe his lies. Satan is a master builder. He doesn't need much ground on which to erect his strongholds. And once they are in place, they give the enemy a ""headquarters"" from which to carry on his activities. ([Moody Bible Institute's "Today in the Word"](#))

---

**James Parker III** - One of the first battles of the Civil War happened near Washington, D. C., on a Sunday afternoon. The two armies lined up for battle, and people came out from downtown Washington, D. C., and set up picnic baskets. It was like a Sunday afternoon soccer match, like a baseball game. They came with their picnic baskets to watch this little battle. And very quickly they realized that it wasn't just a little Sunday afternoon scrimmage, a little skirmish; it was a major war, a battle to the death where thousands, and scores and scores of thousands of people would give their lives. Now we have to understand that's the nature of the battle we're involved in; we often think that we're involved in a little Sunday afternoon scrimmage. We live our lives and act our lives and carry on our lives; we prepare our lives as if that's what we're facing. But what we have to realize is, this is a battle to the death, and it's either us or them in this spiritual warfare. But we don't carry it on the way the world does...And so we are indeed arrayed against fortresses, Paul is saying. Prov. 21:22 says, "A wise man scales the strong dries and brings down the stronghold in which the ungodly trust." The ungodly trust in these strongholds, and the godly man, the wise man, scales those cities and brings down those strongholds that the ungodly are trusting in. So we have divine power to demolish strongholds. (Faith and Mission 14:2 Spring 1997)

---

**Alan Redpath** former pastor at Moody Bible Church, Chicago, writes ([ref](#)) that...

Paul's concern for the church at Corinth (as it would indeed be for us) is simply that the imagination of the mind, the process of thinking, the way of reasoning, the method of logic, the understanding of things which a man adopted in his unconverted days, become projected into the fellowship of the church, and the church begins to fail in its spiritual battle because it adopts carnal procedures.

The process of victory which our Lord taught His disciples was this: that if you cease to resist in the realm of carnality, then you are resisting automatically in the realm that is spiritual, and in this way you overcome the enemy. Resist, counterattack, deal with the situation upon the same level that the world deals with it, and you are defeated. But refuse to follow that principle of life; take up rather the principle of the cross (1Co 1:18) and by non-combat in carnal levels you are combating the enemy in spiritual levels and therefore you will overcome (Jn 16:33, 1Jn 5:4, 5).

To illustrate this, turn to Simon Peter and the incident in which the Lord Jesus began to show to him the principle of the Cross (Mt 16:21, 22, 23). Christ spoke to him about the cross, about the blood, about the way of sacrifice and death. He had spoken earlier about the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying and if it die, it brings forth much fruit, but if it did not die it would abide alone (Jn 12:24); and Peter's answer was, "Not so, Lord, not that way, not the way of the cross and death!" (cp Mt 16:22)

Christ's reply was shattering: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." (Mt 16:23, cp Mt 16:24)

But Peter did not learn his lesson. In the Garden of Gethsemane up goes his sword, out goes his arm, and off goes the man's ear (Jn 18:10, Mt 26:51, 52, 53, 54, Mark 14:47 cp Lk 22:33, 49, 50, 51!). He is still resisting the principle of the cross, still following the procedure of carnality, and taking the line of resistance instead of the line of meekness and submission (Php 2:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). He did not learn his lesson until after Pentecost (and it took him some time then, cp Acts 2:15, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41), but this is the lesson which the Lord Jesus sought to teach him, and the very lesson which Paul is bringing to bear upon the church at Corinth.

You find this principle today in the church in terms of the theological outlook upon the Bible, though I have no wish to get involved in a controversial issue. The difference between what we call today the fundamentalist or the conservative evangelical and all others in their approach to the Book is that we as conservative evangelicals submit ourselves to the criticism of the Word of God, whereas all others submit to their own criticism. This is the basic difference of approach to the whole subject of theology, so much so that, in some circles it is said that if you are orthodox you are out-of-date; you are an obscurantist, and it is an impossible position to hold in the light of modern theology and modern science.

These are some of the high things that Paul said exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and because the evangelical conservative holds to a position in which he submits all his criticisms and life to the authority of Scripture, and refuses to move from that position, while he is only too glad to discuss and consider all enlightenment upon the Book, he is therefore called out-of-date.

Now this I believe is the form of carnality in the church which stems from corruption of the mind not necessarily moral corruption, but the mind which insists in submitting the Word of God to its own criticism and only accepting that which the human intellect can understand and believe. This corruption of mind leads to carnality in the church and to captivity of spirit, for by that means there is that which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. That, in the theological area, is exactly the modern counterpart of our verse.

I wish to come much closer home than that, as I bring this right down to where we live.

## **The Principle of Carnality versus The Principle of Spirituality**

What is the nature of this conflict? It is the battle which goes on in the personal life of every one of us in ordinary, everyday, down-to-earth, practical living—the battle to forsake the principle of carnality and to accept the principle of spirituality. It is the battle to take the line of refusing to resist along the human level, and by so doing, resisting in terms of spiritual warfare, and therefore overcoming. This is something which works itself out in terms of our relationships with one another, as well as in terms of our relationship with God.

If, therefore, it is true that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, if God in calling us to be His followers and to live the Christian life here and now on exactly the same principle as that which was followed by His disciples—in other words, the line of non-resistance, of meekness and crucifixion and death, the line of submission one to another in the fear of God—what then are the weapons a Christian must use, and how does he use them?

I remind you of words which Paul wrote in his letter to the church at Ephesus. We must arm ourselves, because in paraphrase he says,

the weapons of our warfare, though they are not carnal, are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

In other words, there is a way of life, there is an armor, there are weapons which the Christian church (and by that I mean any group of Christians) can use today in ordinary everyday life which will be so invincible that, to quote the words of our Lord Jesus, ". . . the gates of hell shall not prevail against them." (Mt 16:18)

If this is true, then it behooves us surely to give very prayerful attention to this fact, because the fact of the matter is that apart from a mighty awakening and revival in the church, we are fighting a losing battle because we are resisting on carnal levels. This is not something you settle at denominational headquarters or in the high courts of the ecclesiastical world. It is something you begin to settle here and now that causes the tide of Holy Spirit power and life to flow once again through the church, which has been blocked because we as individual believers have rejected God's principles.

What then are the weapons which are mighty through God?

take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand...your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;...your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;...taking the shield of faith,...And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, ...for all saints" (Ephesians 6:13, 14, 15,16,17, 18-note)

Here is the Christian armor. Now will you please notice this : it is not armor to protect the body, for it is not designed to keep the Christian from physical harm, but it is armor designed to protect him against all spiritual attack. It is not something with which he clothes his body, but something with which he clothes his soul. It is hidden from the outward scrutiny of others, but its existence in the realm of a man's soul will be revealed in his daily life. That is why Paul says "though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh . . ." (2Cor 10:3). Yet our whole activity and our actions in the flesh, in the body, in daily conduct, are governed by this inward clothing, the armor of the spirit.

Let a man neglect putting on this armor and he will soon reveal carnality to everybody else in his conduct and behavior. But let him go into the robing room each day with God in the name of the Lord Jesus, and let him there in prayer put on the whole armor of God—truth, righteousness, faith, peace, the helmet of salvation, the Word of God as the sword of the Spirit, and the armor of all-prayer, clothing that the world cannot see—and it will soon be evident to all by his daily conduct in his daily life that he has clothed himself with the whole armor of God (cp Ro 13:11, 12, 13, 14-notes). The absence of a time he takes to clothe himself with the armor of God is revealed in his approach to the Bible, in his criticism of everything, in his refusal of every authority, in his hesitancy to accept the Word of truth, and in his carnality of daily behavior. Here, then, is the answer to the area within the church where the greatest battles are to be fought, in the weapons of our warfare that are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

### **The Mind... The Thought Life**

You may ask, how do they work? They work in the realm of the mind. How is the victory won? It is won in the realm of the thought-life. Does this mean merely asking God to do something while we do nothing at all ourselves? No, indeed. What then is the secret of it? Jesus said, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," and it is our leisure thoughts, our meditative life, that decides our conduct.

Alas, how much time we give to the life as it appears before men, and how little do we give to the life that appears before God! Yet it is that life that shines through everything, it is that life which is lived with the Lord Himself and which is clothed with heavenly armor that reveals itself in spirituality. It is that life, when it is lacking, that displays itself in carnality (cp John 6:63). The world, you see, sees the expression on a man's face, hears the tone of his voice, studies his actions whether they are selfish or unselfish, and by these he is judged inevitably and rightly. In spite of all his efforts to hold it all in check, he is conveying transparently to other people that his Christianity is all in the shop-window, and he is painfully lacking in being clothed with the armor of God in the soul.

To be specific, it works something like this. Somebody says an unkind word about you, or you are accused falsely of something you have not done, or somebody is spiteful in his comments and critical in his attitude. You begin to think about it, you repeat it to yourself over and over again with increased indignation, and because it begins to fill your mind, you tell your friends (with additions of course) until at last, by frequent repetition, you have been insulted twenty times instead of one. You have determined to counterattack, to retaliate, to answer back, to vindicate yourself, and to prove that they are wrong and you are right. This is the carnality in the life which has happened because of corruption in the mind, because in the thought-life you have been defeated before you have to counterattack.

### **The Law of Exclusion**

What then is the answer? As a Christian engaged in this conflict, knowing that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, there is the law of exclusion. How does it operate? When the thought comes and the person is reported to have said what he has said, and the unkindness has been passed over to us, and the criticism has been made, whereas carnality would say, "Counterattack!" spirituality has the mind which was in Christ Jesus (1Cor 2:16) and humbles itself and recognizes that nothing that any person could ever say about any of us is really one hundredth part as bad as the truth if he only

knew it. Therefore, we have no reason to counterattack, but one good reason to submit and to forget. That is the law of exclusion.

## The Law of Attention

But there is the law of attention

"whatsoever things," says Paul, writing to the church at Philippi, "are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Php 4:8-note)

When carnality arises in our hearts, causing us to answer back, to retaliate, and to fail to follow the principle of discipleship laid down by the Master, then at that moment we must think on these things, and answer the enemy by saying, "I'm sorry, my house is full, I have no room for you and I have no time to listen to you." That is the law of attention.

I quote some lovely words from that wonderful book, [The Imitation of Christ](#) by Thomas a Kempis:

Many thoughts have risen up against me, and great terrors which afflict my soul. How shall I pass through them without hurt? How shall I break them in pieces before me? I will go before Thee, O Lord, and I will bring low the proud boasters of the earth and I will open the gates of the prison and reveal to Thee the hidden secret. Do, Lord, as thou saidst and let all wicked thoughts flee from before Thy face. This is my hope and only consolation—to put my trust in Thee, to call on Thee from my inmost heart, and to wait patiently for Thy help and for thy strength."

Yes, truly, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; and they cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and bring into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ. That is the principle upon which the church was founded; that is the principle that was followed by the Master when He stepped from the throne to the manger and from the manger to the cross. That is the obedience He expects from each of His followers. But let us confess with shame, today in the realm of the intellect, the mind, the thought-life, the church—that is, you and I as believers in Christ—has followed the carnal method, and therefore she has divested herself of spiritual power.

God grant that you and I everyday may go into our personal robing room alone with Him, and put on all the armor of God which is mighty to the pulling down of strongholds of the enemy.

Apart from a mighty awakening and revival in the church, we are fighting a losing battle because we are resisting on carnal levels. This is not something you settle a denominational headquarters or in the high courts of the ecclesiastical world. It is something you begin to settle here and now that causes the tide of the Holy Spirit power and life to flow once again in the church, which has been blocked because we as individual believers have rejected God's principles. (Excerpt from [Blessings out of Buffetings. Studies in Second Corinthians. 1984. Revell](#)).

**2 Corinthians 10:5 We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,**

Amplified - [Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One),  
t exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Plummer - seeing that we demolish confident persuasions and every high structure that is being lifted up to oppose the revelation which God has given of Himself, and by making captives of every rebellious device bring them into submissive obedience to the Christ.

NET 2 Corinthians 10:5 and every arrogant obstacle that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to make it obey Christ.

BGT 2 Corinthians 10:5 κα π ν ψωμα παιρ μενον κατ τ ς γν σεω ς το θεο , κα α χμαλωτ ζοντες π ν ν ημα ε ς τ ν πακο ν το Χριστο ,

NLT 2 Corinthians 10:5 We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

ESV 2 Corinthians 10:5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God,

and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

NIV 2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

YLT 2 Corinthians 10:5 reasonings bringing down, and every high thing lifted up against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of the Christ,

ASV 2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ;

CSB 2 Corinthians 10:5 and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to obey Christ.

MIT 2 Corinthians 10:5 and every high tower erected in opposition to knowledge of God, and bringing into line every thought in subjection to Christ.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

NRS 2 Corinthians 10:5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

NAB 2 Corinthians 10:5 and every pretension raising itself against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive in obedience to Christ,

NJB 2 Corinthians 10:5 every presumptuous notion that is set up against the knowledge of God, and we bring every thought into captivity and obedience to Christ;

GWN 2 Corinthians 10:5 and all their intellectual arrogance that oppose the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive so that it is obedient to Christ.

BBE 2 Corinthians 10:5 Putting an end to reasonings, and every high thing which is lifted up against the knowledge of God, and causing every thought to come under the authority of Christ;

- down: Lu 1:51 Ac 4:25,26 Ro 1:21 1Co 1:19,27-29 3:19
- and every: Ex 5:2 9:16,17 2Ki 19:22,28 Job 40:11,12 42:6 Ps 10:4 18:27 Isa 2:11,12,17 60:14 Eze 17:24 Da 4:37 5:23-30 Ac 9:4-6 Php 3:4-9 2Th 2:4,8
- bringing: Mt 11:29,30 Ro 7:23
- every thought: Ge 8:21 De 15:9 Ps 139:2 Pr 15:26 24:9 Isa 55:7 59:7 Jer 4:14 Mt 15:19 Heb 4:12
- the obedience: Ps 18:44 110:2,3 Ro 1:5 16:26 Heb 5:9 1Pe 1:2,14,15,22
- [CLICK FOR MORE COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE](#)

### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:18-25+ (**DESTROYING SPECULATIONS, TAKING CAPTIVES**) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written, "I WILL DESTROY THE WISDOM OF THE WISE, AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE." 20 Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1 Corinthians 3:20+ (**SPECULATIONS**) and again, "THE LORD KNOWS THE **REASONINGS** ([dialogismos](#)) of the wise, THAT THEY ARE USELESS ([mataios](#) - futile, worthless)."

Notice how Paul's description of our invisible enemy is impersonal. Our demonic enemies use men to spread the leaven of speculations and false doctrine which results in faulty Christian behavior, which is in turn ineffective in assaulting the Kingdom of darkness, because the saints have been "wounded."

**We are** (present tense - continually) **destroying** ([kathaireo](#)) **speculations** ([logismos](#)) -This declaration is in a sense a continuation of his earlier statement in which he proposed ([logizomai](#) root of [logismos](#)) "to be courageous (bold) against some." (2Co



10:2+) **Destroying** means tearing down or overpowering **speculations**, and was a "military exercise" in which Paul was continuously engaged. **Speculations** ([logismos](#)) refer to "arguments and theories and reasonings" (Amplified). Worldly thoughts, ideas, reasonings and philosophies are like fortresses (2Co 10:4+) in one's mind in that they function in effect to barricade or shut out "enemy intruders" like the Gospel! **Speculations** (men's revelations) of untruths are diametrically opposed to God's revelation of truth, the latter being the only effective corrective of the former! (**THOUGHT** - Are you daily in the Word of Truth so that the Spirit might use it to purge your thinking of the world's lies and renew your mind to be more like Christ's? 1Co 2:16+). Paul used the related word **reasonings** ([dialogismos](#)) describing the wise thoughts, reasonings, [presuppositions](#) and ideas of the world as worthless (1Co 3:20+).

Worldly weapons are worthless against God's spiritual weapons!

**MacArthur** says **speculations** ([logismos](#)) is "a general word referring to any and all human or demonic thoughts, opinions, reasonings, philosophies, theories, psychologies, perspectives, viewpoints, and religions. The fortresses in view here are not demons, but ideologies. The notion that spiritual warfare involves direct confrontation with demons is foreign to Scripture. Christians who verbally confront demons waste energy and demonstrate ignorance of the real war. We are not called to convert demons, but sinners. The battle is rather with the false ideologies men and demons propagate so that the world believes them. Doomed souls are inside their fortresses of ideas, which become their prisons and eventually their tombs—unless they are delivered from them by belief in the truth. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Henry Morris** on **speculations** (KJV = imaginations) - The spiritual panoply of weapons ordained by God may not appear impressive outwardly to a humanistically oriented society, but it is only these that can pull down the strong holds of Satan in this world, casting down the humanistic "reasonings" (literal meaning of "*imaginations*") of the leaders of this world's educational and political systems. Otherwise, the enemy will "spoil" us--that is, defeat us and despoil us of the carnal weapons we have tried to use (Colossians 2:8). ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Kruse** - The arguments (**speculations** [logismos](#)) Paul destroys are the 'strongholds' in which people fortify themselves against the invasion of the knowledge of God (the gospel). ([Online Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians - chapter 10](#))

**Murray Harris** asks "What are these fortified positions that crumble before the weapons of the Spirit? Fanciful human sophistry and intellectual pretensions, or as Paul expresses it in 1 Corinthians 3:19, "the wisdom of this world." The phrase *pan hupsoma* (translated "every pretension" **ED**: LOFTY THING) refers to any human act or attitude that forms an obstacle to the emancipating knowledge of God contained in the gospel of Christ crucified and therefore keeps men in oppressive bondage to sin. ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**And every lofty thing** ([hupsoma](#)) **raised up** ([epairo](#)) **against the knowledge** ([gnosis](#)) **of God** - **Lofty thing** literally referred to a tower or raised rampart but in context refers to "lofty" human thinking which is falsely thought to be superior (more "lofty") to God's thinking as revealed in His Word and in the Gospel. In context it is likely similar to Paul's warning description in Col 2:8+ of "philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world rather than according to God."

**Adrian Rogers** on **lofty thing** - These are towers of intellectualism that must topple. It is not intelligence but intellectualism - high-minded attitudes and sophistication.

**R Kent Hughes** - literally, "We destroy every high thing lifted up against the knowledge of God. As Carson (From Triumphalism to Maturity) points out, Paul's language of destruction here is not merely about winning arguments or debates. "He means something far more: his weapons destroy the way people think, demolish their sinful thought patterns, the mental structures by which they live their lives in rebellion against God." In Paul's own words, his spiritual weapons tear down "every high thing lifted up against the knowledge of God." Paul is referencing the citadels of sin in our lives—every high thing, every haughty thought, every action that forms a barrier to the knowledge of the living God. Happily, the gospel regularly destroys the high things lifted up against the knowledge of God. Paul declared in Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (1:16)..... When people come to believe, it is not because of their cleverness or charisma or the cut of their clothing or their clever cant, but because the gospel has cut down the high towers in their souls that were once set against the knowledge of God. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness](#))

**Adrian Rogers** on **speculations...lofty thing** - imaginations, knowledge, thought. It's obvious that there is a war. Satan is behind it, and your mind is the battleground. Satan's desire is to conquer and to control your thought life, and then to make your thought life a citadel from which he can war against God, because, look, if you will, here—it says here, "Casting down ... every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Satan wants your mind.

**Barber** on **lofty thing** "is that which has been raised up like the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, above what God's Word has to say. It's something that is humanistic; it's something that man has come up with and built it to such a structure that it won't allow itself to

hear the Word of God.

**MacArthur** - Paul further defined sinners' strongholds of ideas as **every lofty thing**—that is, any unbiblical system of thought exalted as truth—that is **raised up against the knowledge of God**. There is the key. Spiritual warfare is not a battle with demons. It is a battle for the minds of people who are captive to lies that are exalted in opposition to Scripture.....Like Paul, before salvation, all unbelievers have a fortress in which they attempt to hide from the true knowledge of God. Those fortresses take endless forms in philosophy, psychology, world religions, cults, apostate forms of Christianity, or evolutionary naturalism—a predominant fortress in Western culture today ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Paul is teaching that the battlefield in spiritual warfare is our MIND. How important then it is to continually renew our mind with the Word of Truth the only effective "antidote" for the "world of lies!"

**Kruse** - Both the stronghold of v. 4 and the tower (proud obstacle) of this verse stand for the intellectual arguments, the reasonings erected by human beings against the gospel. It is by the proclamation of the gospel, however, that God has chosen to release his power by which these very arguments ('the cleverness of the clever', 1 Cor. 1:19) will be destroyed, and by which those who believe will be saved (cf. Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:17–25; 2:1–5; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:13). It should be added that Paul's proclamation of the gospel, like our Lord's preaching of the kingdom, was not bare declaration, but involved reasoning and arguing with his hearers in an effort to remove false barriers thrown up against the truth (cf. Acts 18:4; 19:8–10). ([Online Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians - chapter 10](#))

**TDNT** says that here in 2Cor 10:5 **hupsoma** is used by Paul to present "the image of a "fortress with high towers" for the attitude which proudly resists the true knowledge of God but which the apostle overcomes with the gospel.

**And we are taking every thought (noema) captive (aichmalotizo) to the obedience (hupakoe) of Christ** (cf "court-martial") **NLT** = "We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ." In this passage Paul gives his "military objective" so to speak and that was for every person to become obedient to the Captain of the Lord's Host (Josh 5:15+), the Captain of their salvation (Heb 2:10KJV+)(cf Acts 6:7+). He was not seeking to make them obedient to himself but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Taking...captive** is a combination of the words for spear and capture in battle, in this case referring to a spiritual battle in the battlefield of their mind. **Taking...captive** is in the present tense, so Paul is saying this is their continual activity, indicating they are always on alert for "enemy intruders" (thoughts, ideas) and pointing the spear at them (so to speak). Note also that is in the active voice, indicating we must make a choice of our will to carry out "spearing" the intruding thoughts! The implication is that we have the ability to do so, and indeed Php 2:13NLT says "it is God Who is in us giving us the desire and the power" to take these intruding thoughts captive at "spearpoint." In Paul's day when a fortress was captured and the ramparts torn down, prisoners were taken by the victors. In spiritual terms, energized by the Spirit giving us the desire and the power, we take the "sword of the Spirit" (like a "spear") and use it to capture the intruding thought (Eph 6:17+).

**THOUGHT** - Have you had any "enemy intruders" today, thoughts like "I can't forgive that person," "I need to gratify my flesh," "I am angry at that person," etc, etc. Did you take them captive? If you are filled with the Word and the Spirit, you can successfully corral those thoughts beloved! If you do not take these enemy intruders captive, guess what? Our spiritual enemies (the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#)) will use them to take us captive!

**R Kent Hughes** - The word "thought" refers more specifically to the mind as the intellectual center of our being. The idea is that Christ does not simply help people to think holy thoughts, but that "their mental structures, the plans and schemes, are taken over and transformed as they come to a new allegiance" (Carson). Most Americans are materialistic, and many are metaphysical materialists as they functionally accord things with a religious "Diamonds are forever" weight. But Christ transforms such thought patterns and installs new paradigms. Likewise, a Buddhist's agnosticism and indifference is revolutionized when his thoughts are taken captive by the gospel of Christ. Could anything be more wonderful than to have every thought experience captive obedience to Christ? Could we wish anything better for others? Could anything be more beautiful ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness](#))

**Murray Harris** on taking captive - It is not a case of the Christian's effort to force all his thoughts to be pleasing to Christ. Rather the picture seems to be that of a military operation in enemy territory that seeks to thwart every single hostile plan of battle, so that there will be universal allegiance to Christ. ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Henry Morris** on every **thought** - "Thought" ([noema](#)) here is the same word as "mind." Judicious use of our spiritual weapons--especially the one offensive weapon, "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17)--will result in opening the blinded "minds" (2 Corinthians 4:4) of those who have rejected God and His Word and capture them for Christ. Thus, we are not to use such carnal weapons as *bullets*--or even *ballots*--in our battle for the human mind but the mighty spiritual weapons in "the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11).

**Lowery** - No thought ([noema](#) ; cf. 2Co 2:11), including those of his opponents, is beyond the reach of the One who "catches the wise in their craftiness" and "knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile" (1 Cor. 3:19-20; cf. Job 5:13; Ps. 94:11). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Kruse** - The imagery is of a stronghold breached and those sheltering behind its walls taken captive. So the apostle's purpose is not only to demolish false arguments but also to bring people's thoughts under the lordship of Christ. His calling as an apostle was 'to bring about the obedience of faith ... among all the nations' (Ro 1:5). ([Online Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians - chapter 10](#))

**MacArthur** - To assault and throw down the fortresses of false religions, opinions, beliefs, and philosophies, only one weapon will suffice: the truth. That is so obvious that Paul does not mention it. Only one thing exposes and corrects lies—the truth. Thus, the only offensive weapon in the Christian soldier's armor is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Spiritual warfare is an ideological conflict, fought in the mind by assaulting the proud fortresses of ideas that sinners erect against the truth. Aichmalōtizō (taking captive) literally means, "to take captive with a spear." Using God's truth, believers smash enemy fortresses to the ground, march the prisoners out, and bring them into subjection (obedience) to the Lord Jesus Christ. They rescue sinners from the domain of darkness, "snatching them out of the fire" (Jude 23). After being taken prisoner by Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road, Paul immediately asked, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10). The rebellion of his sinful, proud heart was ended; the walls of his fortress crashed down in ruin, and the Lord Jesus Christ conquered his heart. Such is the experience of all the redeemed; the term the obedience of Christ is a synonym for salvation (cf. Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 15:18; 16:26; Heb. 5:9).....The key to being successful in spiritual warfare is becoming proficient at wielding the sword of the Word of God against the lies people believe. It is impossible to fight error without knowing the truth. Just as soldiers train constantly in the use of their weapons, so also must Christian soldiers constantly study the Scriptures. Only the power of God's truth can smash the lies of satanic false systems; to those "who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). The gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16; cf. 2 Cor. 6:7; Heb. 4:12). ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**David Guzik** comments that **taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ** practically means "To battle against the carnal way of thinking and doing, our thoughts must be brought captive and made obedient to Jesus. Whenever we begin to think in the carnal way, we must stop our thoughts (**Ed**: enabled by the indwelling Spirit, alert to falsehood, error and lies because we have a clear knowledge of the Word of Truth), take dominion over them in Jesus, and not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2). Paul's first application (**Ed**: in the context of these verses) is towards the carnal, worldly thinking of the Corinthian Christians that made them despise Paul and his "weakness," doubting his apostolic credentials. But Paul's principle has a much broader application (see topic Application). **We are not helpless victims or recipients of our thoughts.** We can choose to stop our thoughts, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Thoughts of lust, thoughts of anger, thoughts of fear, thoughts of greed, bitter thoughts, evil thoughts -- they are part of every thought that **may** be... **must** be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Someone might object: "I don't want my thoughts to be captive to anyone. I don't want my thoughts to be captive to Jesus. I want my thoughts to be free." This is wrong on at least two points. First, you belong to someone no matter what; ultimately, we either serve Jesus or Satan. Second, if you are a Christian, you are a purchased possession of Jesus Christ. You belong to Him. (see 1Co 6:19+, 1Co 6:20+) ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**John MacArthur** writes that "There aren't any fleshly techniques or words that can win a spiritual war. We must depend on spiritual weaponry and a spiritual battle plan. Our sufficiency in Christ includes weapons that are divinely powerful, that can destroy the fortresses of the spirit world and all its lofty thoughts that are raised up against the knowledge of God. What are those weapons? They are not mystical phrases or verbal formulas. They are not the power to scold or command demons. There's nothing secret or mysterious about these weapons. They are not tricky or complicated. What are they? Ephesians 6:13-18 is perhaps the most familiar text on the Christian's spiritual weaponry...observe carefully the nature of this arsenal. The pieces of armor are all spiritual commodities: truth, righteousness, faith, the gospel, God's Word, and prayer. They are not cryptic formulas, but the simple assets every believer inherits in Christ. How can we use those weapons? Technique is not the issue; personal character is. Look once again at 1Ti 1:18, 19... That sheds some light on how we are to fight the devil. Rather than chasing demons around, trying to figure out their names and shooing them away, Paul told Timothy to focus on keeping the faith (sound doctrine) and a clear conscience (righteous living so the conscience cannot accuse). Again, in 2Ti 2:3, 4, (describes) another very crucial principle for success in the war against the powers of darkness: disentangle yourself from worldly things, and commit yourself to doing the will of the Commander. Do you see what Scripture is saying? If we do not use the truth, live the truth, believe the truth—if we do not have clear consciences that come from holy living, and if we are not disentangled from the world, doing the will of God—it doesn't matter what we say to the powers of darkness. Winning against Satan is not a question of claiming some kind of imagined authority over him; we simply need to pursue righteousness, avoid sin, and stand firm in the truth. Satan cannot defeat any believer who lives that way. Conversely, weak doctrine and sinful living will make a person vulnerable no matter what verbiage he may spit into the air thinking Satan is listening. ([MacArthur, J. Our Sufficiency in Christ](#))

Bringing every thought into ... the obedience of Christ.

The apostle is planning a campaign; his words glow with the fire of military enthusiasm: but, as one has eloquently said, the weapons of his warfare are not carnal; the standard under which he fights is a more sacred sign than that of Caesar; the territory he invades is more difficult of conquest than any which kept the conquerors of the world at bay. He sees rising before him the lofty fortresses of hostile error; they must be reduced or razed. Every mountain fastness to which the enemy can retreat must be scaled and destroyed; and every thought of the soul, which is hostile to the authority of the Divine Truth, must become a prisoner of war in the camp of Christ.

Be sure to distinguish between the proper use of the intellect by the man who recognizes its necessary limitations and uses it in the humble and reverent inquiry after truth, and that undue exaltation of the intellect, which sets itself on high as the ultimate judge of truth, or which roams wildly, unheeding the Divine control. There are vain thoughts, sensual thoughts, cynical and self-reliant thoughts, sceptical thoughts, proud thoughts, wandering and wayward thoughts; but the apostle says that, however strongly they fortify themselves against Christ, they should and must be brought into captivity. Paul once thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus, but became his humble disciple.

The intellect has its province, but faith has hers; and while the intellect tends to exalt man, faith humbles him and leads him captive in the chains of love. We must come with absolute obedience to Christ, that every vail may be torn away, and whatever blurs the clear surface of the mirroring intellect may be removed.

---

## VIRUS

[Bring] every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. —2 Corinthians 10:5

Recently I've had to contend with a virus that invaded my computer. **What bothers me most is that viruses are created maliciously. What's worse, I permitted the virus to enter my machine by opening what I thought was an innocent e-mail. Sin resembles a computer virus. Satan wants to destroy Christians by infecting their minds.** But the apostle Paul urged the believers at Corinth to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

**Just as we let a virus into our computers, we also let darkness into our lives when we thoughtlessly open ourselves unthinkingly to the godless messages that permeate our culture. We let down our guard and hardly notice the sin that enters our lives.**

But by confessing our sin, reading God's Word and praying, we build a firewall, or barrier, to safeguard our minds. With the help of the Spirit, we'll keep our minds from becoming unwitting hosts for unwanted guests. Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

GUARD YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU WOULD YOUR WALLET.

---

## Oswald Chambers - Do it yourself Determinedly Demolish some Things.

Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. 2 Cor. 10:5.

Deliverance from sin is not deliverance from human nature. There are things in human nature, such as prejudices, which the saint has to destroy by neglect; and other things which have to be destroyed by violence, i.e., by the Divine strength imparted by God's Spirit. There are some things over which we are not to fight, but to stand still in and see the salvation of God; but every theory or conception which erects itself as a rampart against the knowledge of God is to be determinedly demolished by drawing on God's power, not by fleshly endeavour or compromise (v. 4).

It is only when God has altered our disposition and we have entered into the experience of sanctification that the fight begins. The warfare is not against sin; we can never fight against sin: Jesus Christ deals with sin in Redemption. The conflict is along the line of turning our natural life into a spiritual life, and this is never done easily, nor does God intend it to be done easily. It is done only by a series of moral choices. God does not make us holy in the sense of character; He makes us holy in the sense of innocence, and we have to turn that innocence into holy character by a series of moral choices. These choices are continually in antagonism to the entrenchments of our natural life, the things which erect themselves as ramparts against the knowledge of God. We can either go back and make ourselves of no account in the Kingdom of God, or we can determinedly demolish these things and let Jesus bring another son to glory.

**Determinedly Discipline other Things.**

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10:5.

This is another aspect of the strenuous nature of sainthood. Paul says—"I take every project prisoner to make it obey Christ." (Moffatt.) How much Christian work there is to-day which has never been disciplined, but has simply sprung into being by impulse! In Our Lord's life every project was disciplined to the will of His Father (John 5:30). There was not a movement of an impulse of His own will as distinct from His Father's—"The Son can do nothing of Himself." (Jn 5:19) Then take ourselves—a vivid religious experience, and every project born of impulse put into action immediately, instead of being imprisoned and disciplined to obey Christ.

This is a day when practical work is over-emphasized, and the saints who are bringing every project into captivity are criticized and told that they are not in earnest for God or for souls. True earnestness is found in obeying God, not in the inclination to serve Him that is born of undisciplined human nature. It is inconceivable, but true nevertheless, that saints are not bringing every project into captivity, but are doing work for God at the instigation of their own human nature which has not been spiritualized by determined discipline.

We are apt to forget that a man is not only committed to Jesus Christ for salvation; he is committed to Jesus Christ's view of God, of the world, of sin and of the devil, and this will mean that he must recognize the responsibility of being transformed by the renewing of his mind. ([My Utmost For His Highest](#))

---

### A W Tozer - GUIDANCE IS BY THE SPIRIT

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10:5

We can always trust the moving and the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives and experiences, but we cannot always trust our human leanings and our fleshly and carnal desires. That calls for another word of balance. We know that the emotional life is a proper and noble part of our total personality. But by its very nature, it is of secondary importance, for religion lies in the will, and so does righteousness.

God never intended that such a being as mankind should become the mere plaything of his or her feelings. The only good that God recognizes is the willed good. The only valid holiness is a willed holiness. That is why I am always a little suspicious of the overly bubbly Christian who talks too much about himself or herself—and not enough about Jesus. That is also why I am more than a little concerned about the professing Christian whose experience does not seem to have resulted in a true inner longing to be more like Jesus every day in thought, word and deed!

---

### Related Resources:

- [What is metaphysical naturalism? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is naturalism? | GotQuestions.org](#) - "Naturalism attempts to fortify itself against God by altogether shutting Him out of public life, social policy, the courts, and eliminating all biblical influence in morality and ethics. This and all the other deceptive and deadly ideologies must be destroyed and the incarcerated sinners rescued." (MacArthur)

---

**Destroying** (2507) (**kathaireo** from **kata** = down + **haireo** = to take for oneself) means to cause something or someone to be lowered. To take or bring down (Of our Lord Jesus from the Cross - Mark 15:36, 46, Lk 23:53, Acts 13:29; of buildings - Lk12:18) or to bring something down from one point to another. Figuratively **kathaireo** speaks of bringing down rulers (Lk 1:52 - overthrowing them, taking away their power) or destroying evil nations (Acts 13:19), evil idols (Acts 19:27) or evil thoughts (2Co 10:4). **TDNT** writes that **kathaireo** has "four main senses a. "to take down," b. "to tear down," c. "to destroy," and d. "to dethrone." The LXX uses it in all these senses for various Hebrew equivalents, e.g., taking down the brazen sea, tearing down houses etc., destroying cities, and dethroning rulers.

**Speculations** (3053) (**logismos** from **logizomai** = process of careful study or reasoning and arriving at a conclusion) represents the product of cognition and thus means consideration, reasonings, reflections, calculations. The Greeks used **logismos** to describe the consideration and thought which preceded and determined one's conduct. In the present context **logismos** speaks of reasonings (sophistries) that are contrary to or hostile to the truth of God.

**Lofty thing** (5313) (**hupsoma** from **hupsoo** = to elevate, lift up, raise high) literally meant height, high place, something elevated. **Hupsoma** ("the exaltation") was a term in Greek which referred to the sphere above the earth. It is used of "a height," as a mountain or anything definitely termed a "height". **Thayer** says **hupsoma** referred to an elevated structure, a barrier, a rampart, or a bulwark. Chrysostom says it meant something like "towering fortress". The figurative meaning of **hupsoma** in the present passage is that of

an arrogant or proud obstacle which pictures these thoughts as "high towers". In the Septuagint it conveyed the idea of arrogance. **Zodhiates** says **hupsoma** is used here... Figuratively of a proud adversary, a lofty tower or fortress built up proudly by the enemy ([Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Raised up** (raise)(1869) **epairo** means to lift up, hold up ("lifting up holy hands" = 1 Ti 2:8, cf Lk 24:50 as a gesture of blessing; Lxx = Ps 134:2), in Lxx of Moses lifting up his hands and Israel prevailing in the battle (Ex 17:11), lift up a sail (hoist) (Acts 27:40). Figuratively, to rise up against, to be in opposition (2 Cor 10:5, cf Lxx = Ezra 4:19 "that city has risen up against the kings", Da 11:14 "many will rise up against the king of the South"). To lift up or exalt oneself (be arrogant, put on airs) (2 Cor 11:20; Lxx - Jer 13:15 - "do not be haughty").

**Knowledge** (1108) (**gnosis** from **ginosko** = to know especially by experience) is the comprehension or intellectual grasp of something and speaks of information acquired through experience or education. It can describe experiential knowledge rather than a mere passing acquaintance. On the other hand **gnosis** can reflect only intellectual comprehension without affecting one's character. **Gnosis** was a favorite word of the **Gnostics**, the most formidable enemy of the Church of the second century. The **Gnostics** claimed a superior knowledge peculiar to an intellectual caste and specifically they claimed a superior, private knowledge over and above that of the Bible. Certainly the **Gnostics** were arrogantly opposed to the **knowledge of God**, and sadly modern day counterparts have subtly infiltrated the church of Jesus Christ.

**Taking...captive** (163) (**aichmalotizo** from **aichme** = a spear + **halotós** = to be taken or conquered) was a military term which mean to take captive as a prisoner or be led away captive (eg Lk 21:24). Paul uses this verb figuratively to describe the power of indwelling **Sin** to take one captive or make them a prisoner in a spiritual sense (Ro 7:23note). This verb is used by Paul in 2Ti 3:6 (note) to refer to subjecting or captivating "weak women" by teaching unsound doctrine (error). **Kittel** has the following note on this word group...**1. Proper Use.** The "prisoner of war" is a miserable person in special need of divine aid (cf. Lk. 21:24). The exile gave the term a religious reference (cf. Ps 126:1). The messenger of Is. 61:1 proclaims freedom to captives, and Jesus accepts this as a messianic task (Lk. 4:18). Visiting prisoners is a loving duty (Mt. 25:36ff.), and working and praying for release is enjoined (cf. Philemon 1: 22). God himself grants liberation in Acts 5:19. **2. Figurative Use.** Imprisonment may be used to denote subjection to error (2Ti 3:6-note) or sin (Rom. 7:23), but also to Christ (Ep 4:8note; 2Co 10:5). Paul calls his helpers "fellow-prisoners," probably not in a literal sense but in the sense of being similarly subject to Christ (cf. "fellow-servants," Col 1:7-note; Col 4:7-note). ([Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**Thought** (3540) (**noema** from **noeo** = perceive in turn from **noús** = mind) is literally the result of the activity of the "**nous**" or mind, that part of man which thinks. **Noema** means that which is thought (a thought), perceived with the mind (a mental perception), understood, pondered, or considered. A **thought** is that which one has in mind as product of an intellectual process. Thought is either the act or operation of the mind, when attending to a particular subject or thing, or it is the idea consequent on that operation. Note especially 2Co 2:11 where **noema** describes the "**schemes**" of the devil. Webster says a **scheme** is a project; a contrivance; a plan of something to be done; a design. Scheme is a method devised for making or doing something or achieving an end and stresses the calculation of the end in view which in the devil's case describes his (or his minion's) plan which is motivated by craftiness and self-interest. Beware! Take up the shield of faith to deflect demonic "fiery missiles" (Ep 6:16-note). **Noema** - 6x in 6v - 2Cor 2:11; 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3; Phil 4:7

**Obedience** (5218) (**hupakoe** from **hupó** = under + **akoúo** = hear) (Click study of related verb hupakouo) literally means "hearing under", that is, listening from a subordinate position in which compliance with what is said is expected and intended. **Hupakoe** speaks of the one hearing as being under the authority of some one else. Thus, **hupakoe** comes to mean compliance (disposition to yield to another) with the demands or requests of someone over us. Obedience is submission or hearkening to a command. Obedience is the carrying out the word and will of another person, especially the will of God. **Illustration** - A missionary translator was endeavoring to find a word for "obedience" in the native language. This was a virtue seldom practiced among the people into whose language he wanted to translate the New Testament. As he returned home from the village one day, he whistled for his dog and it came running at full speed. An old man, seeing this, said, admiringly in the native tongue, "Your dog is all ear." Immediately the missionary knew he had his word for obedience. (Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations by Paul Lee Tan) **Hupakoe** conveys the picture of one listening and following instructions. Submitting to that which is heard involves a change of attitude, forsaking the tendency of the fallen nature to rebel against Divine instructions and commands and seeking God's will, not self will. Someone has said that a "proof" that we are of the elect is not an empty prating about how secure we are once we believed, but rather how sensitive we are to the principle and practice of obedience to Jesus. **Hupakoe** - 15x in 14v - Ro 1:5; 5:19; 6:16; 15:18; 16:19, 26; 2Co 7:15; 10:5, 6; Philemon 1:21; Heb 5:8; 1Pe 1:2, 14, 22

---

**Diadochos**, a fifth-century writer included in **The Philokalia**, writes that "those pursuing the spiritual way must always keep the mind free from agitation in order that the intellect, as it discriminates among the thoughts that pass through the mind, may store in the treasuries of its memory those thoughts which are good and have been sent by God, while casting out those which are evil and

come from the devil

---

**Taking Music "Captive"** - Music can clearly impact our minds and therefore must be included among those thoughts we take "captive...to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). What should be our "filter"? Ultimately the music should inspire a greater love for God and appreciation for what He has done and if it fails to do so take it "captive". When you hear a song, ask yourself if the lyrics fulfill the criteria in Phil. 4:8. This will cause you to reject many songs because their lyrics are untrue, dishonorable, impure, etc. Second, how do the thoughts generated by the music affect your mind and heart? Some music for example may stimulate the memory of an unhealthy past experience and thus must be taken captive.

---

**Timothy Warner** - Satan is also called "the accuser of our brothers" (Rev 12:10). He accuses us to God and he accuses us to ourselves. God convicts us of sin by showing us how to deal with it through the Cross. Satan accuses us to discourage us and make us want to give up. He will sometimes put an evil thought in our minds and then say, "And you say you are a Christian—look what you're thinking!" I've talked with ministers and missionaries who've struggled with this. It's one of the reasons Paul tells us to "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2Cor. 10:5). (Discipleship Journal)

---

**C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook** - "For the LORD your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deuteronomy 20:4).

We have no enemies but the enemies of God. Our fights are not against men but against spiritual wickednesses. We war with the devil and the blasphemy and error and despair which he brings into the field of battle. We fight with all the armies of sin -- impurity, drunkenness, oppression, infidelity, and ungodliness. With these we contend earnestly, but not with sword or spear; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Jehovah, our God, abhors everything which is evil, and, therefore, He goeth with us to fight for us in this crusade. He will save us, and He will give us grace to war a good warfare and win the victory. We may depend upon it that if we are on God's side God is on our side. With such an august ally the conflict is never in the least degree doubtful. It is not that truth is mighty and must prevail but that might lies with the Father who is almighty, with Jesus who has all power in heaven and in earth, and with the Holy Spirit who worketh His will among men. Soldiers of Christ, gird on your armor. Strike home in the name of the God of holiness, and by faith grasp His salvation. Let not this day pass without striking a blow for Jesus and holiness.

---

**Ruth Myers** - The spiritual battlefield is within us, in our minds and hearts. Years ago, a friend shared with us an approach that helps win inner battles, whether they come as subtle temptations or traumatic struggles. He based his plan on 2Cor 10:3, 4, 5, where Paul speaks of "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

You can remember this plan through an acrostic, **ACT**. **ACT** gives you an on-the-spot way to take up your shield of faith and your mighty sword—your main weapons when you're in the thick of the battle. Here's the approach in a nutshell:

**Acknowledge** what you are thinking that gives Satan an advantage, that fits in with his purposes; acknowledge also the feelings that come with these thoughts. To cast something down, we must first acknowledge it's there. Confess sin if you have welcomed and fed these thoughts. As time permits, pour out your heart to the Lord, letting Him in on what you feel (Psalm 62:8).

**Choose** against these false, negative, or impure thoughts. And choose not to drain your inner strength by nurturing the disruptive feelings that accompany these thoughts. Make this a decisive choice. Shout it to yourself if necessary: "This is not the way I'm going to think."

**Think** the truth, with thanksgiving. This brings your thoughts under Christ's authority. Have in mind ahead of time a specific truth, a specific Scripture, that will work for each battle that is common in your life. If the false or troubling thought has played over and over in your mind, like a broken record, you may need to create a new thought pattern by thinking the truth over and over. Truth is a powerful sword, a light that dispels darkness. Thanksgiving and praise help release the power of truth within you and devastate the enemy's purposes. (Discipleship Journal)

---

**David Terry** (Discipleship Journal) - Sinful thoughts are a cancer, and if not operated upon they will spread. We can't allow the thoughts of sin to exist and grow. Evil thoughts are evil works in embryo form, and they must be eradicated. But what about evil thoughts that seem to recur regardless of what we do? What are we to do with these sinful thoughts that repeatedly molest us?

When indwelling sin has been entrenched by repetition over a long period of time, it takes the power of God's promises to win victory over them. Attack a sinful thought with a contrasting promise. If you place Phil. 4:13—"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" alongside the thought I can't do anything right, you will defuse the power of the negative thought. Instead of being impotent and depressed, you will barely lose stride in your service of the King. So cover an evil thought with a promise from God, then pray that whenever the sinful thought comes to your mind the promise will come also, thus diffusing the power of the thought.

Temptations do recur. But good habits are as hard to break as bad habits. God's word punishes thoughts by exposing them, starving them, and choking them with truth.

---

**George Sanchez** - As a counselor I have had people tell me about struggles they're having in their minds with temptations and lusts and so on, and they say, "I just can't do anything about it." Now I could answer that I understand, it's not as bad as it seems, and so forth. But I can't say that because the Bible says we can do something about it. No one forces us to think these things. We think about them because we choose to. It is our responsibility to make these thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. God's Spirit and his word will help us do it.

In exercising this responsibility I must first be willing to change. Knowing that my mind is the control center of who I am, I must guard it. When I get up in the morning, what am I thinking? What controls my thoughts during the day? Am I thinking the way God wants me to?

---

**Theodore Epp - How to Mind Your Mind View** - 2 Corinthians 10:1-6

We must depend on the Spirit's power to control our thoughts. Here is what the Scriptures have to say on that point: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God [the indwelling Holy Spirit].... bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2Co 10:4,5).

Only the Spirit of God can make this possible in our lives, and He does it only when we are under His complete control.

When an evil thought comes to our mind, what are we to do? We should turn it over to the Spirit and ask Him to take charge. I have personally done this for years. It is the only method that works for me.

I cannot help it when a thought comes, whether it is good or bad. I do not, however, have to dwell on that thought. So the moment a wrong thought comes, I ask the Holy Spirit to take over, for that is His responsibility.

When I give Him control, He gives me victory. I have experienced this thousands of times.

Thoughts that come to our mind can also be the Holy Spirit's reminder to pray. In 1Th 5:17<sup>note</sup> we are told to pray without ceasing. Can we possibly do that? Only by letting the Holy Spirit control us.

As He dwells in us and we continue to give Him control so that no sin hinders His working in our hearts, He reminds us of the things He wants us to pray about.

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ep 4:23-note).

---

**C H Spurgeon** prays...Great Captain of salvation, thou canst achieve the victory. We have compassed this Jericho these many days, but still the walls fall not. Up, thou mighty man of war, for thou art such, and come thou to the battle and then the battlements of sin will fall. "The Lord is a man of war: Jehovah is his name." (Ex 15:3) Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? (Is 51:9) Because of truth and righteousness, ride forth in thy majesty. (Ps 45:4) For peace on earth and glory to God in the highest, come forth in the glory of thy might with the everlasting gospel, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

---

One successful minister opens every service with an exercise based on Paul's words in 2Co 10:5: "Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." He urges his congregation to offer this prayer, in part: "My dear Lord, I submit my thought processes to the control of Your Holy Spirit. Free me from the monopoly of unimportant thought. Rescue me from the blinding whirl of anxious thoughts. Slow me in pursuits that are my own; quicken me in pursuits that are of Your choosing. Wind me down, quiet me, warm me, speak to me, teach me. Amen." (from Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations)

---

**D. G. Kehl** addressing the challenge of **sexual purity** (including in our thought life) in an impure world says...We do not fall in a moment; the predisposition to yield to sin has been forming, building, germinating—but not necessarily consciously so (cp Heb 3:13). Sin has both a cumulative and a domino effect. Satan plants subtle stimuli, often subliminal ones (cp Ep 6:16); he influences an attitude; he wins a "minor" victory (e.g., Ep 4:26, 27)—always in preparation for the "big" fall, the iron-bound habit.

---

**A W Tozer** (from **Tozer on the Holy Spirit**) - Anyone who wishes to check on his true spiritual condition may do so by noting what his voluntary thoughts have been over the last hours or days. What has he thought about when free to think of what he pleased?



Toward what has his inner heart turned when it was free to turn where it would?

When the bird of thought was let go did it fly out like the raven to settle upon floating carcasses or did it like the dove circle and return again to the ark of God? Such a test is easy to run, and if we are honest with ourselves we can discover not only what we are but what we are going to become. We'll soon be the sum of our voluntary thoughts. BAM046-047

The best way to control our thoughts is to offer the mind to God in complete surrender. The Holy Spirit will accept it and take control of it immediately. Then it will be relatively easy to think on spiritual things, especially if we train our thoughts by long periods of daily prayer. Long practice in the art of mental prayer (that is, talking to God inwardly as we work or travel) will help to form the habit of holy thought. BAM044, 046-047

It is possible to have our whole life so possessed by the Holy Spirit that our very thoughts and intuitions will come to us in quietness and simplicity, with the consciousness that they have been touched by His thoughts and illumined by His light, that we are walking continually with our Father, and receiving constantly the testimony that we please God. CTBC, Vol. 2/093

---

**Randy Alcorn** - What we permit to reach our mind through our senses will greatly influence our thought life, whether we want it to or not. Every immoral image carelessly taken in, every thought not under control, programs the mind for immorality.

As a Christian, I must examine myself. Is my mind an open manhole into which anything can fall? Is it a drain that indiscriminately sucks in everything? An "open mind" can be a virtue—but a mind open to whatever a godless world has to dump into it is not a mind under the lordship of Christ.

But isn't it inevitable that our senses will be exposed to some ungodly input? Yes. Does this automatically produce ungodly minds? Not necessarily.

It is possible to establish a grid, a filter composed of strong biblical convictions and Christ-centered thoughts (1Co 2:16, cp Pr 4:23, 22:5, 28:26). Such a filter can allow us to examine carefully, sort out, and deal with ungodly input (1Th 5:21, 22- see notes)

We may not be able to prevent rust and foreign particles in our water pipes, but by installing a filter we can still have fresh water. Likewise, a filter of Christian purity can protect us from the immoral stimuli that bombard us. In Martin Luther's terms, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair." (Discipleship Journal)

---

**THOUGHT CONTROL**- Philippians 4:8 (see note) - When a preacher visited a young couple, the wife said to him, "We're new Christians, and although I'm saved I've lived a worldly life - swearing, partying, and all those things. The past keeps coming back to haunt me. It's destroying my peace of mind."

The pastor replied, "When something like that comes to mind, analyze it and recognize its evil source. Then, with God's help, reject it and put it out of your life. Finally, replace it by saturating your mind with His truth."

She took his advice and learned to control her thoughts. A few months later she testified. "I'm not being defeated by my past anymore."

What we think about is important, for our words and actions reflect our personal musings and meditations. The Scripture says, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Mt 12:34). An evil idea once fixed in the mind may surface without warning. If we allow ungodly thoughts to dominate our minds, our character will become warped.

When sinful ideas pop into your head, refuse to concentrate on them. Quote a Scripture verse, sing a hymn, or pray. With God's help, you will gradually bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2Cor 10:5). - Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Search me, O God, my heart discern;  
Try me, my inmost thoughts to learn.  
Help me to keep from sin, I pray,  
Guarding my mind throughout this day. -Anon.  
(cp Ps 139:23,24)

**In public, guard your tongue;  
In private, your thoughts!**

---

**Virus** - Some days my computer helps me fly like an eagle. Other times, it bogs me down like a hippopotamus. On "eagle days" I'm

grateful for my computer. But there are those “hippo days” when I rue the day I bought one.

Recently I’ve had to contend with a virus that invaded my computer. What bothers me most is that viruses are created maliciously. Bright people who live with a darkness in their lives want to make other people miserable. What’s worse, I permitted the virus to enter my machine by opening what I thought was an innocent e-mail.

Sin resembles a computer virus. Satan wants to destroy Christians by infecting their minds. But the apostle Paul urged the believers at Corinth to bring “every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2Cor 10:5).

Just as we let a virus into our computers, we also let darkness into our lives when we open ourselves unthinkingly to the godless messages that permeate our culture. We let down our guard and hardly notice the sin that infects our minds.

But by confessing our sin, reading God’s Word, and praying, we build a firewall, or barrier, to safeguard our minds. With the help of the Spirit, we’ll keep our minds from becoming unwitting hosts for unwanted guests. — Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Heavenly Father, I’m often careless with what I allow to enter my mind. By Your Spirit, please help me to guard my mind today. By Your grace, keep me from situations that wage war on my thought life. Amen.

**Guard your thoughts as you would your wallet.**

---

**F B Meyer writes about bringing every thought captive** - THE apostle is planning a campaign; his words glow with the fire of military enthusiasm: but, as one has eloquently said, the weapons of his warfare are not carnal; the standard under which he fights is a more sacred sign than that of Caesar; the territory he invades is more difficult of conquest than any which kept the conquerors of the world at bay. He sees rising before him the lofty fortresses of hostile error; they must be reduced or razed. Every mountain fastness to which the enemy can retreat must be scaled and destroyed; and every thought of the soul, which is hostile to the authority of the Divine Truth, must become a prisoner in the camp of Christ.

Be sure to distinguish between the proper use of the intellect by the man who recognizes its necessary limitations and uses it in the humble and reverent inquiry after truth, and that undue exaltation of the intellect, which sets itself on high as the ultimate judge of truth, or which roams wildly, unheeding the Divine control. There are vain thoughts, sensual thoughts, cynical and self-reliant thoughts, skeptical thoughts, proud thoughts, wandering and wayward thoughts; but the apostle says that, however strongly they fortify themselves against Christ, they should and must be brought into captivity. Paul once thought he ought to do many things contrary to Jesus, but became His humble disciple.

The intellect has its province, but faith has hers; and while the intellect tends to exalt man, faith humbles him and leads him captive in the chains of love. We must come with absolute obedience to Christ, that every veil may be torn away, and whatever blurs the clear surface of the mirroring intellect may be removed. (F. B. Meyer. Our Daily Homily)

---

**Rob Morgan** gives us some practical application of 2Corinthians 10:5...

As I said earlier, all the temptations we face come to us via our thoughts. We think about lying before we do it. We think about adultery before we do it. We think about secret sins and lustful behavior before we commit it. We think covetous thoughts before we make that unwise purchase. We think those angry thoughts before we say those angry words.

There is a wonderful story in a book entitled The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., which was based on Dr. King’s speeches and writings. On one occasion he told of growing up in Atlanta, Georgia:

I remember another experience I used to have in Atlanta. I went to high school on the other side of town—to the Booker T. Washington High School. I had to get the bus in what was known as the Fourth Ward and ride over to the West Side. In those days, rigid patterns of segregation existed on the buses, so that Negroes had to sit in the backs of buses. Whites were seated in the front, and often if whites didn’t get on the buses, those seats were still reserved for whites only, so Negroes had to stand over empty seats. I would end up having to go to the back of that bus with my body, but every time I got on that bus I left my mind up on the front seat. And I said to myself, “One of these days, I’m going to put my body up there where my mind is. (Clayborne Carson, ed., The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr. (New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1998), p. 9.)

And he did. Our bodies and our lives always end up where our minds are. A few months ago I delivered a Sunday morning message about the perils of pornography, and it’s very easy to have a pornographic brain. Or it’s easy to have a brain that thinks depressed thoughts all the time. It’s easy to have a greedy, materialistic mind. All our temptations and sins come to us via our brains.

**So how do we take every thought and make them captive to Christ? I have four important prescriptions.**

## **Starve**

First, you have to starve your mind. The temptations and sins inside your brain thrive on what you feed them, and if you cut off their food supply, they'll begin to gradually wither up. I know a man who, when he checks into the hotel on business trips, asks that they disconnect the television because he doesn't want to be tempted. A lot of the trouble you're having with your thought life would clear up if you'd stop feeding your sin with salacious materials.

## **Feed**

Second, feed your mind. Find Bible verses to memorize and start pushing out the wrong thoughts with the right ones. Choose some verses having to do with the mind and with the thoughts, and commit them to memory.

Isaiah 26:3, 4 says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Romans 12:1, 2, which I've already referred to, tells us to yield our bodies as living sacrifices and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Romans 8 says, "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace."

There's tremendous power in memorizing these verses and meditating on them; and whenever tempting thoughts float through your brain, train yourself to refuse them by quoting Scripture to them. That's the way Jesus defeated Satan in Matthew 4, and you can do the same. Starve the bad thoughts and feed the good ones.

The biography of Geoffery Bull, the British missionary to Tibet who was captured and imprisoned by Chinese Communists, tells of how his captors took Bull's possessions from him, threw him in a series of prisons, robbed him of his Bible, made him suffer terribly at their hands for three years. In addition to extreme temperatures and miserable physical conditions, coupled with bodily abuse and near starvation, Bull was subjected to such mental and psychological torture that he feared he would go insane.

He had no Bible now, but he had studied the Bible all his life. So he began to systematically go over the Scriptures in his mind. He found it took him about six months to go all the way through the Bible mentally. He started at Genesis, and recalled each incident and story as best he could, first concentrating on the content and then musing on certain points, seeking light in prayer. He continued through the Old Testament, reconstructing the books and chapters as best he could, then into the New Testament and on to Revelation. Then he started over again. He later wrote, "The strength received through this meditation was, I believe, a vital factor in bringing me through, kept by the faith to the very end." (Geoffrey T. Bull, *When Iron Gates Yield* (Chicago: Moody Press, n.d.), passim.)

So many people have iPod's now, and I want to encourage you to find biblical lectures and sermons and download them. Instead of listening to some of the music or talk radio that usually blares from the car radio, listen to scripture and sermons and Bible lectures. (Check out the podcasts on our [www.donelson.org](http://www.donelson.org) website.) Feed your mind.

## **Take Control**

Third, take control of this area of your life. I had a letter recently from a man in Illinois who told me that after he got out of the service he spent a great deal of his time driving tour buses for various groups. As a result, he said, he was often on the road driving through the night. Everyone else was asleep, and he couldn't listen to the radio and he had no one to talk to; and he was tempted during his long hours at the wheel to fantasize and think lustful thoughts. But, he said, I developed a plan. It had three parts. For the first third of my time, I forced my mind to meditate on Scripture passages that I had read or learned or studied or memorized. The middle portion of the time was spent in prayer and I took my time in bringing to the Lord every item of praise and prayer that I had on my heart. The last third of the time was in quietly singing to myself the great hymns of the faith. I found that when I followed this pattern, the devil never had a chance with my thoughts.

## **Report In**

It's important for most of us to report in, to have someone with whom we can be honest about areas in which we need accountability. I've spoken about that recently, and I think most of us realize that this is often a very helpful tool.

We live in a twisted world of temptation; and Christians are being bombarded from every direction. The Lord Jesus wants control of our minds. He wants us to be pure of mind. He wants us to be renewed in our minds. He wants every thought captive to Him. Starve, feed, take control, and report in. Keep a healthy, positive, clean mind.

And let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, for Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.  
(See his excellent message 2Corinthians 10:5 Every Thought Captive)

## 2 Corinthians 10:6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

AMP Being in readiness to punish every [insubordinate for his] disobedience, when your own submission and obedience [as a church] are fully secured and complete.

Plummer - We are quite prepared to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

EXPNT We are ready to punish anyone there who does not obey, but first we want you to obey fully.

NRSV We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

Weymouth while we hold ourselves in readiness to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as ever you as a church have fully shown your obedience.

NET We are also ready to punish every act of disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

The Living Bible I will use these weapons against every rebel who remains after I have first used them on you yourselves and you surrender to Christ.

KJV 2 Corinthians 10:6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

NET 2 Corinthians 10:6 We are also ready to punish every act of disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

BGT 2 Corinthians 10:6 καὶ ἔτοιμοι ὄντες κολῶσαι πάντας τοὺς ἀπειθεῖς, ὡς ὅταν πληρωθῆτε ὑποτακτικῶς.

NLT 2 Corinthians 10:6 And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient.

ESV 2 Corinthians 10:6 being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

NIV 2 Corinthians 10:6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

YLT 2 Corinthians 10:6 and being in readiness to avenge every disobedience, whenever your obedience may be fulfilled.

ASV 2 Corinthians 10:6 and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full.

CSB 2 Corinthians 10:6 And we are ready to punish any disobedience, once your obedience has been confirmed.

MIT 2 Corinthians 10:6 These weapons are poised to crack down also on all disobedience until such time as your obedience is in full compliance.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 10:6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

NRS 2 Corinthians 10:6 We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

NAB 2 Corinthians 10:6 and we are ready to punish every disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

NJB 2 Corinthians 10:6 once you have given your complete obedience, we are prepared to punish any disobedience.

GWN 2 Corinthians 10:6 We are ready to punish every act of disobedience when you have become completely obedient.

BBE 2 Corinthians 10:6 Being ready to give punishment to whatever is against his authority, after you have made it clear that you are completely under his control.

- **And we are ready:** 2Co 13:2,10 Nu 16:26-30 Ac 5:3-11 13:10,11 1Co 4:21 5:3-5 1Ti 1:20 3Jn 1:10
- when: 2Co 2:9 7:15

## OBEDIENT ONES WOULD SEPARATE OUT DISOBEDIENT

**And we are ready ([hetoimos](#)) to punish ([ekdikeyo](#)) all disobedience ([parakoe](#)), whenever your obedience is complete ([pleroo](#))** - Once the Corinthian church responded in obedience to the Gospel, it would become very clear who among them were still in disobedience. **Obedience is complete** refers to their being fully committed to Christ as their Lord. Then Paul could effectively separate out the wheat from the chaff so to speak (cf Ps 1:4-6+) The result would be a church set free from the false teaching and teachers (at least for a time).

**Malherbe** notes that being “**ready**” was a phrase used of military preparedness (“Antisthenes and Odysseus and Paul at War,” in Paul and the Popular Philosophers [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1989],

**John MacArthur** - Paul would not unleash his formidable apostolic power on anyone until each had taken his stand. That way, it would be clear who accepted the truth and who rejected it. Paul would be compassionate to the former, but the latter would find him to be a courageous and highly competent opponent. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Constable** has a very practical comment writing that Paul "wanted to do that only after the whole church had made a clean break with the rebels in its midst. If the church would not stand with him in disciplining his unrepentant opponents, his discipline would not be effective. Unless any church as a whole is willing to support the discipline of its member or members, the discipline that its leaders seek to impose will be ineffective.

**Murray Harris** - If circumstances forced Paul to turn from "meekness and gentleness" to a stern assertion of his authority, from appeal to discipline, his plan of action was in two stages. First, there was the need to bring the Corinthians' obedience to completion (cf. 2:9; 7:15). This would be achieved when they dissociated themselves from the interlopers, fully recognized Paul's apostolic authority, and made a total break with idolatry (6:14-7:1). Second, there was the punishment of "every act of disobedience" performed by his adversaries from Palestine or by any Corinthians who remained insubordinate. Precisely what form the punishment would take cannot be known. Only after securing a firm base in the Corinthian church would Paul risk a face-to-face confrontation with those who still opposed him. Unless a church as a whole is willing to recognize and support spiritual discipline, that discipline will remain largely ineffective. Another important principle emerges when vv. 5 and 6 are compared. Obedience to Christ entails submission to his appointed representatives. ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - When I was pastoring in Chicago, I met weekly with three pastor friends, and together we united in "warfare praying." We claimed God's promise to cast down the wrong thinking that was keeping people from surrendering to God; and God did great things in the lives of many people for whom we interceded. Once the walls in the mind have been torn down, the door to the heart can be opened. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

---

**Ready** ([2092](#)) [hetoimos](#) from an old noun **heteos** = fitness) means ready, prepared, in a state of readiness. **TDNT** - The clear meaning of this word group is preparation both in the active sense of “making ready” and in the passive of “readiness,” “ability” or “resolution.”

**Punish** (take revenge) ([1556](#)) [ekdikeyo](#) from **ek** = out or from + **dike** = right, justice; see cognates = [ekdikesis](#) and [ekdikos](#)) is literally that which proceeds from justice. The idea is to vindicate one's right or to do one justice. to inflict appropriate penalty for wrong done (of special significance in an honor/shame-oriented society) punish, take vengeance for (2Cor 10:6, Lxx - Dt 32:43); 6v in NT - Lk. 18:3; Lk. 18:5; Rom. 12:19; 2 Co. 10:6; Rev. 6:10; Rev. 19:2

**Disobedience** ([3876](#)) [parakoe](#) from **para** = beside + **akouo** = hear) is literally "hearing aside" or "a hearing amiss." It was originally used of flawed hearing, then what might be called half-hearted listening, and finally the attitude of purposefully filtering out what the hearer did not want to hear. It is about closing one's ears to God's voice and as such describes an active disobedience which follows this inattentive or careless hearing. Each of the 3 NT uses speak of a [volitional](#) (with deliberate intent) "unwillingness to hear," which results in disobedience.

**Complete** ([4137](#)) [pleroo](#) means to be filled ([passive voice](#) = saints acted on by outside force = "[Divine Passive](#)") to the brim (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2+, a city, Acts 5:28+, needs Phil 4:19+), to make complete in every particular, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to flood, to diffuse throughout, to pervade, to take possession of and so to ultimately to control.

**2 Corinthians 10:7** You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, **let him consider** this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

**AMP** Look at [this obvious fact] which is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him reflect and remind himself that even as he is Christ's, so too are we.

**KJV** Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.

**NET** You are looking at outward appearances. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should reflect on this again: Just as he himself belongs to Christ, so too do we.

**ESV** Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

**CSB** Look at what is obvious. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, let him remind himself of this: Just as he belongs to Christ, so do we.

**NLT** Look at the obvious facts. Those who say they belong to Christ must recognize that we belong to Christ as much as they do

**The Living Bible** The trouble with you is that you look at me and I seem weak and powerless, but you don't look beneath the surface. Yet if anyone can claim the power and authority of Christ, I certainly can.

**NEB** Look facts in the face. Someone is convinced, is he, that he belongs to Christ? Let him think again, and reflect that we belong to Christ as much as he does.

**MLB:BV** Take a look at what you are facing. If someone is confident that he belongs to Christ, let him ponder this, that we are Christ's as well as he.

**NRSV** Look at what is before your eyes. If you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we.

**Phillips** Do look at things which stare you in the face! So-and-so considers himself to belong to Christ. All right; but let him reflect that we belong to Christ every bit as much as he.

- **You are looking at things as they are outwardly:** 2Co 10:1 \*marg: 2Co 5:12 1Sa 16:7 Mt 23:5 Lu 16:15 Joh 7:24 Ro 2:28,29
- **If anyone is confident in himself:** 1Co 3:23 14:37 15:23 Ga 3:29
- **just as he is Christ's, so also are we:** 2Co 5:12 11:4,18,23 12:11 13:3 1Co 9:1 Ga 1:11-13 2:5-9 1Jn 4:6

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Corinthians 14:37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.

### **DON'T JUST EVALUATE MY CRITICS SUPERFICIALLY**

Paul now moves on from the military metaphors and in fact begins to engage directly in spiritual warfare.

**Lowery** gives some background - Who these opponents were can only be answered tentatively. Apparently they were Jews (11:22) but where they came from is not known. They believed themselves apostles of Christ (10:7; 11:23), a claim Paul rejected (11:13). They brought letters of recommendation (3:1), indulged in self-commendation (10:18), and identified themselves with certain so-called "super-apostles" (cf. 11:5). ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**You are looking at things as they are outwardly** - **Looking** is best interpreted as a command. Paul is calling for the Corinthians to consider the evidence, focusing on what is obvious, and in this way they would be able to discern if he or his opponents belonged to Christ (as they claimed in the next part of the passage). "Look at what is [patently obvious!](#)" "Look at the facts; not what these teachers say, but what you all can see." (Plummer) The Corinthians were looking at external attributes of Paul's adversaries, analyzing them on a fleshly or worldly level. Clearly his opponents sought to cast doubt on his apostleship. Paul is telling the Corinthians in effect to examine "beneath the surface" which should have stirred their minds to recall that even they themselves were the "seal of his apostleship in the Lord." (1Co 9:2)

**Broomall** - Evidently some at Corinth measured a man by outward appearance (cf. 1 Cor 1:12; 3:3, 4). ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Guzik** - Paul doesn't say that it is wrong to test an apostle's credentials but that the Corinthians used the wrong test. They judged

only by outward appearance. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**If anyone is confident (peitho) in himself that he is Christ's-** If is a first class conditional indicating that Paul's opponents were in fact saying with confidence "We belong to Christ." This situation was really taking place in Corinth. **If anyone** is singular and may be Paul's way of singling out some ringleader of the opposition. The [perfect tense](#) implies that they held fast to their false confidence! **In himself** conveys the sense he is Christ's as judged "by his own fair judgment."

**Broomall** has a pithy comment on **confident in himself** - The verb trust (second perfect of peithō, "to trust"—as in 5:11) sets forth an internal persuasion that results in outward conviction (cf. its use in Phil 3:4; 2 Tim 1:5, 12). No group can be more cocksure than those who are deluded by the devil (cf. 2 Cor 4:3, 4; 11:13 ff.).([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**P E Hughes** - If they would but look into their hearts and face the irrefutable facts of their spiritual experience, they would perforce have to acknowledge that Paul was in truth their own genuine apostle and reject the unsubstantial claims of those spurious apostles who had intruded themselves into their community. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**Utley** on the repetition of the reflexive pronoun **himself** - Paul uses the term heautou twice in this verse. These false teachers had deceived themselves. This is the hardest spiritual condition to reason with or to affect. ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur**- The false apostles' claim to belong to Christ can be understood in 4 ways: 1) that they were Christians; 2) that they had known Jesus during His earthly life; 3) that they had an apostolic commission from Him; or 4) that they had an elevated, secret knowledge of Him. Their claim that some or all of those things were true about themselves implies that they denied all of them to be true of Paul. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Murray Harris** points out Paul's opponents supported their claims by their "commendatory letter (3:1), the authoritarian manner (11:20), the spectacular vision, the remarkable ecstatic experience (cf. 12:1-7), rhetorical skill (11:6), and "pure" Jewishness (11:22). ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Some friends and I once listened to a man preach whose entire sermon was made up of impressive "big words," an occasional quotation from the Bible (usually taken out of context), and many references to world events and "the signs of the times." As we left the meeting, one of my friends said, "First Kings 19:11 describes that performance perfectly: 'The Lord was not in the wind.'" Yet people around us were saying that it was "the most wonderful sermon" they had ever heard. I seriously doubt that ten minutes later, they were able to recall one concrete thing that the preacher had said. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Utley** - The false teachers were claiming spiritual authority and standing, but were denying Paul's. ([2 Corinthians 10 Commentary](#))

**let him consider (logizomai) this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we-** Paul repeats the reflexive pronoun **himself** commanding his opponents to do a little self examination - let him reckon or calculate again ([logizomai](#))! They may think they belong to Christ and Paul did not, but Paul is quite sure of his standing with Christ. Paul will go on to prove his authenticity in the following passages. Here for argument's sake he makes the assumption that they belong to Christ, but later he will destroy the self-deception of these impostors writing

For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds. (2Cor 11:13-15+)

---

## **Sam Storms - "Super" Spirituality and a Call for Discernment**

2 Corinthians 10:7 Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.

The Christian world is all abuzz about leadership these days. Take a look at any list of best-selling books and you'll find at least three or four of the top ten that are concerned with some aspect of leadership, whether in identifying the essence of the good and successful sort or in warning of the bad. It's the latter that I'd like to briefly address in this meditation.

I'm sickened, as I'm sure you are, by the almost daily barrage of news concerning either the self-serving, authoritarian practices of some professed Christian leader or the moral scandal that has befallen yet another. Where do these people come from? How do they manage to attain such lofty heights of praise and power? Why do people grant them such unqualified allegiance? What accounts for their ability to amass so much wealth and fame and authority over the lives of their followers?

Don't be misled. I'm not talking about the obvious and notorious cult figures such as David Koresh or Jim Jones or the leaders of

certain polygamous groups who have been much in the news of late. I have in mind local church pastors and leaders of parachurch ministries as well as those who have risen to fame and fortune on the waves of “revival” movements and other sensational and supernatural spiritual happenings.

Countless theological and sociological studies have examined such folk in an effort to understand the source of their power and the secret to their allure. I’ve read a few of them myself, and they’ve often been spot on target. Amidst the variety of explanations for their success, one is common to all, which brings us to our text in 2 Corinthians 10.

However, before noting Paul’s comments, let me differentiate between the sort of authoritative and self-aggrandizing “shearer of the sheep” that the apostle confronted in the church at Corinth and the truly gifted and godly pastor of today’s mega-church. My words that follow are not intended to indict those who, through faithful and diligent service, have built large churches and gathered zealous disciples. Not all forms of success are bad! Quite a few prominent leaders whose ministries have drawn thousands of devoted followers are to be honored and emulated. They are not the focus of my concern or the target of my criticism.

I have in mind the aggressive, self-righteous, supremely self-confident person whose alleged authority borders on legalistic control. This is the person whose flamboyant style, charismatic personality, and sheer energy of will seduce his followers into suspending their critical faculties and throwing discernment to the wind. This sort of “leader” does not humbly serve and sacrifice for the flock but expects them (without necessarily saying so) to supply him with financial blessings and a wide array of other perks and privileges. This individual is typically unaccountable and not held to the same standard that he requires of his ardent devotees.

So what explains this remarkable mystique? Why do so many fall prey to such claims? To what does this sort of “leader” appeal as the reason why he should be treated with such extraordinary respect and devotion? Look at Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 10:7 for at least one answer to our question:

Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Christ’s, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ’s, so also are we. (v. 7)

The NASB renders the opening words of verse 7 as a statement of fact: “You are looking at things as they are outwardly.” More likely this is a command: “Look at what is before your eyes.”

What they are to look at and from which they are to draw appropriate conclusions would include such things as the fact that they are themselves the fruit of Paul’s labors, bearing witness to the authenticity of his calling as an apostle (see 1 Cor. 9:1–2; 2 Cor. 3:1–3); that Paul “belongs” to Christ (as do his coworkers and all believers) no less than the intruders; that his authority came from Christ and was always exercised for the building up of the Corinthians; and that his actions and words were not incompatible, as some alleged, but were always aimed at the same goals, being prompted by the same motives.

The “anyone” of verse 7 likely “points to a particular individual, the ringleader of the Judaizing intruders who expressed the viewpoint of them all.” But what precisely is it that this representative figure is claiming, on the basis of which he and like-minded others are challenging Paul’s authority?

This man is claiming, literally, to be “of Christ.” The genitive is certainly possessive, thus suggesting that he promoted himself as one who belonged to the Lord in some unique and special way. Several suggestions have been made concerning the precise nature of this statement.

Some contend that they were claiming to be Christians and insisting Paul was not. But this is highly unlikely. As radically opposed to him as they were, there’s no indication in the letter that they questioned his salvation.

Some say these opponents claimed to belong to the “Christ party” mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:12 (where some said, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ”). But would Paul have responded to such a claim by saying he is of the Christ party no less than they? Given his strong denunciations of the schismatic spirit in Corinth, he would hardly now have endorsed it!

Others suggest they were appealing to an earthly relationship with Jesus. They knew him during the time of his sojourn but Paul didn’t, thus putting them at an advantage to him. But in verse 7b Paul claims to have no less a relation to Jesus, and we know he had no personal contact with the Lord until after the ascension, most likely on the road to Damascus.

Might it be a claim to have received a special commission from Jesus? But that is an assertion made only by the “super apostles” (cf. 11:5) whom Paul does not address until the next chapter. Here he is dealing with “insiders” who are critical of him because of his feeble previous visit and his frightening (“severe”) follow-up letter (cf. 10:9–11).

The most likely interpretation is that they were asserting some special, ongoing relationship with Christ, making their point with an obviously feigned humility. One can almost see a slight tilt of the head together with just the right inflection of voice: “I am Christ’s man. I belong to Jesus in a way you don’t. He has a higher interest in me than in you. He has a deeper affection for me than for you.



I have access to his mind and heart in a way that transcends whatever claims you might make. Therefore, I and a few others have been given an authority and power and place above you and your co-workers.”

In many such cases the person who stands center stage doesn't explicitly assert that he or she is the recipient of special divine favor or revelatory insights worthy of only a chosen few. They would never commit the tactical error of publicly promoting themselves as uniquely “anointed.” They simply do nothing to disabuse their followers of such false perceptions. Their calculated silence is mistaken for humility and their power base grows.

Is this not precisely the grounds on which so many today build their reputations and undergird their authority? False and self-serving leadership that ultimately works to enhance the person's fame and fortune is almost always the result of allowing people to think one has a unique and privileged relationship with God, one that is unavailable to ordinary believers. It is frequently, if not most times, grounded in the claim to supernatural experiences, whether angelic visitations or third heaven translations or having heard the voice of God with a clarity and force beyond what any average Christian might experience.

Let me say it as forcefully as I can: Beware of all such claims to a superior or “super” spirituality! Beware of any suggestion that one has special knowledge or insights unavailable to others! Beware of those whose only credentials are the visions they have allegedly seen or the angels with whom they have allegedly conversed (cf. Col. 2:18)! [I say this as one who believes in the gift of prophecy, visions, and angelic encounters.]

On the other hand, genuine, godly leadership that warrants your allegiance is built on character, not charisma. It is grounded in virtue, not visions. Its appeal is the centrality of Christ, not displays of power or heightened states of ecstasy. And at the heart of such authentic authority is the faithful proclamation of a cross-centered, Christ-exalting gospel, which is to say, a preaching of “Jesus Christ as Lord” and “ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor. 4:5).

All of us, at some point or other, will have to “look at what is before our eyes” (v. 7a) and pass judgment on the legitimacy of claims to spiritual authority. What criteria shall we employ? Upon reading the following words of Charles Spurgeon, I think I now know:

I have not the slightest desire to suppose that I have advanced in the spiritual life many stages beyond my brethren. As long as I trust simply to the blood and righteousness of Christ, and think nothing of myself, I believe that I shall continue to be pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ, that this joy will be in me, and that my joy will be full. [A Sincere and Pure Devotion to Christ:](#)

---

**Confident** (convinced, persuaded) (3982) [peitho](#) means literally to persuade or induce by words to believe. Peitho is a strong verb, carrying the components of confidence, reliance, and hope. The NT uses (see examples below) in the [perfect tense](#) mean to cause to come to a particular point of view or course of action. The idea is to come to a **settled persuasion** concerning something or to be persuaded. It means to be so convinced that one puts confidence in something or someone. The idea of a settled conviction is the result of a past completed process of turning a matter over in one's mind until one is persuaded of it.

**2 Corinthians 10:8 For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,**

NIV So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

AMP For even though I boast rather freely about our power and authority, which the Lord gave for your upbuilding and not for demolishing you, yet I shall not be put to shame [for exceeding the truth],

NLT I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.

NRSV Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

NTMS:ITEETRGT If, however, I were to boast more loudly of our apostolic authority, which the Lord has given us that we may build you up, not pull you down, I should have no reason to feel ashamed.

YLT for even if also anything more abundantly I shall boast concerning our authority, that the Lord gave us for building up, and not for casting you down, I shall not be ashamed;

NEB Indeed, if I am somewhat over-boastful about our authority—an authority given by the Lord to build you up, not pull you down—I shall make my boast good.

NET For if I boast somewhat more about our authority that the Lord gave us for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of doing so.

The Living Bible I may seem to be boasting more than I should about my authority over you—authority to help you, not to hurt you—but I shall make good every claim.

MLB:BV Even if we do boast excessively about our authority, which the Lord granted us for your establishment and not for your destruction, I shall not be put to shame;

REB Indeed, if I am boasting too much about our authority—an authority given by the Lord to build your faith, not pull it down—I shall make good my boast.

ESV For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed.

KJV For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

- **For even if I boast** : 2Co 1:24 2Co 13:2,3,8,10 Ga 1:1
- **I will not be put to shame** 2Co 7:14 12:6 2Ti 1:12

### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 1:31 (**GOD HONORING BOASTING**) so that, just as it is written, “LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.”

2 Corinthians 12:19+ All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. Actually, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and **all for your upbuilding** ([oikodome](#)) beloved.

Ephesians 4:11-12 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the **building up** ([oikodome](#)) of the body of Christ;

2 Corinthians 13:10+ (**PAUL'S AUTHORITY TO BUILD UP**) For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the **authority** which the Lord gave me for **building up** ([oikodome](#)) and not for tearing down.

1 Corinthians 14:26+ (**ALL THINGS FOR EDIFICATION**) What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification.**

Acts 26:16+ (**SOURCE OF PAUL'S AUTHORITY**) (**JESUS DECLARED TO HIM ON THE DAMASCUS ROAD**) ‘But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

## PAUL'S AUTHORITY FOR EDIFICATION

**Lowery** - In order to retrieve this indiscriminate church Paul would have to engage in what he found personally repugnant—self-commendation. His goal was not self-enhancement but restoration of the Corinthians. ([The Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**For even if I boast** ([kauchaomai](#)) **somewhat further about our authority** ([exousia](#)) - "For even if I boast a little too much of our authority" Paul initially expresses some hesitancy in boasting about his own authority. It is the third class condition, introducing a probability - he is preparing his readers for a "boastful section". Paul in defending his character and his apostolic authority feels compelled to do something that was very uncomfortable for him and that was to **boast** (in a God honoring, positive sense) about the ministry Jesus had given him to accomplish. His boast was not an [empty boast](#) but had as its foundation the Word of God and the work of God.

**Guzik** - It seems that Paul is uncomfortable writing about his own authority. This is because he is a humble, godly man. He uses boast here in an exaggerated, almost sarcastic sense to show he would prefer not to talk about his own authority; it feels like “boasting” to him. Paul realizes how much better it would be if the Corinthian Christians would just recognize his authority so that he wouldn’t have to boast somewhat more about it. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Broomall** - Here we have an **authority** (1) assumed—**for though I should boast**, (2) possessed—**our authority**, (3) received

—**which the Lord hath given us**, (4) defined—**for edification**, and (5) justified—I **should not be ashamed**. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** on **boast** In this section St. Paul is thoroughly *haunted* by this word. The fact that a word could thus possess and dominate over his style and imagination shows how deeply he was moved. The Corinthian Church, with its inflated factions and their fuglemen, reeked with boasting, and St. Paul is driven, with utter distaste, to adopt in self-defence language which, to the uncandid and indiscriminating, might seem to wear the same aspect. The word, which is unfrequent in other Epistles, occurs eighteen times in these chapters alone

**Murray Harris** - In Galatians (Gal 1:1, 11, 12, 15, 16+) Paul had emphasized against his opponents the divine origin of his call and gospel. Here he stresses the divine origin of his authority (cf. 2Co 3:5, 6; 2Co 13:10) and its employment for the common good (1Co 12:7). ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Which the Lord gave for building you up ([oikodome](#)) and not for destroying ([kathairesis](#)) you** - The firm foundation of Paul's unshakeable confidence was that the Lord Jesus Christ **gave** Paul him authority when He called him on the Damascus Road. His authority was not human but divine (belonging to the Lord). Paul later described "the authority which the Lord gave me for building up ([oikodome](#)) and not for tearing down." (2Co 13:10+). The entire tenor of 2 Corinthians was aimed at **building up**, not tearing down. Of course **building up** would require him to tear down the "false scaffolding" of his opponents (cf "destruction ([kathairesis](#)) of fortresses" and "destroying ([kathaireo](#)) speculations and every lofty thought raised up against the knowledge of God" - 2Co 10:4-5+!) By using the terms **building you up and not for destroying you** Paul is implying that his opponents were doing the converse (cf 1Co 3:17)!

**ESV Study Bible**, "**Building up**" the church is a common Pauline description of new covenant ministry (see Rom. 14:19; 15:2, 20; 1 Cor. 3:9-14; 14:3-5; 1 Thess. 5:11). Paul frames the last section of 2 Corinthians with this theme; cf. 2 Cor. 10:8 with 2Co 13:10 (see 2Co 12:19).

**Chrysostom** observes that the casting down of imaginations "is itself a special form of edification—removing hindrances, detecting the unsound, and laying the true together in the building".

**Keener** Old Testament prophets were called both to build up and to tear down (e.g., Jeremiah 1:10), but Paul is called only to build up the Corinthians (2 Cor. 12:19; 2 Cor. 13:10). - Bible Background Commentary - The IVP Bible Background Commentary – New Testament.

**I will not be put to shame** - Paul is simply saying he would not be ashamed to boast about his use of the **authority** which had been given to him by his Lord Jesus Christ. He knew he was not making an empty boast for as he would later say he was actually not boasting in himself nor his accomplishments but was boasting in the Lord (2Co 10:17+). He would not be put to shame by his boast because it would not be proven false. Paul could say as the saying goes "**the facts speak for themselves!**"

**THOUGHT** - In boasting in the ministry the Lord had given him, Paul was boasting in the Lord. This is an excellent reminder for all of us to emulate, especially when we experience "success" of any kind in ministry. We need to immediately recall 2Co 3:5-6 and Ps 115:1. And then we need to quickly cry out the benediction of Ro 11:36+ that "from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." Amen?

**Gilbrant** - Paul felt no shame in this defense of himself. His motives were pure. He knew that if the opposition should be able to discredit him personally, they would nullify his message. Actually, his enemies were the ones who stood in disgrace.

---

## **Paul Apple - PRINCIPLES DEMONSTRATING THAT SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY MUST BE JUDGED BY SPIRITUAL STANDARDS**

1. Spiritual authority is given by God (:8,13)
2. Spiritual authority cannot be recognized through physical appearance or attributes (:7,12), rather we learn to judge as God judges and commend whom God commends (:18)
3. Spiritual authority is exercised in meekness (:1) meekness is not timidity (:2,10,11) spiritual leader must be strong to fight spiritual wars with spiritual weapons (:3-5)
4. Spiritual authority is given for edification (:8)
5. Spiritual authority will not be ashamed (or refuted) (:8)
6. Paul's Spiritual Authority within the field (probably geographical) God has assigned (:13)
7. Effectiveness of Spiritual Leader in a church is limited by the submission and faith of the church (:6,15)

---

**Boast** (exult, glory) ([2744](#)) [kauchaomai](#) akin to **aucheo** = boast + **euchomai** = pray to God <> **auchen** = neck which vain persons are apt to carry in proud manner) means to boast over a privilege or possession. The idea is to take pride in something. Note

repetition in Corinthians - Rom. 2:17; Rom. 2:23; Rom. 5:2; Rom. 5:3; Rom. 5:11; 1 Co. 1:29; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 3:21; 1 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 5:12; 2 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 9:2; 2 Co. 10:8; 2 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 10:15; 2 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 10:17; 2 Co. 11:12; 2 Co. 11:16; 2 Co. 11:18; 2 Co. 11:30; 2 Co. 12:1; 2 Co. 12:5; 2 Co. 12:6; 2 Co. 12:9; Gal. 6:13; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 2:9; Phil. 3:3; Jas. 1:9; Jas. 4:16

**Authority** (1849) **exousia** from **éxesti** = it is permitted, it is lawful) means the power to do something and was a technical term used in the law courts, of a legal right. "**Authority** or right is the dominant meaning (of exousia) in the New Testament." (Vincent) **Exousía** refers to delegated **authority** and combines the idea of the "right and the might", these attributes having been granted to someone.

**Building up** (edification) (3619) **oikodome** from **oikos** = dwelling, house + **doma** = building or **demo** = to build) is **literally** the building of a house and came to refer to any building process. Figuratively the idea is the process of edification or building up spiritually or spiritual strengthening. As used here in Eph 2:21, oikodome refers to the church as the building for God's indwelling. 18v in NT - Matt. 24:1; Mk. 13:1; Mk. 13:2; Rom. 14:19; Rom. 15:2; 1 Co. 3:9; 1 Co. 14:3; 1 Co. 14:5; 1 Co. 14:12; 1 Co. 14:26; 2 Co. 5:1; 2 Co. 10:8; 2 Co. 12:19; 2 Co. 13:10; Eph. 2:21; Eph. 4:12; Eph. 4:16; Eph. 4:29

## 2 Corinthians 10:9 for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

NIV I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters.

AMP Neither would I seem to be overawing or frightening you with my letters;

NLT I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters.

NEB So you must not think of me as one who scares you by the letters he writes.

NET I do not want to seem as though I am trying to terrify you with my letters,

The Living Bible I say this so that you will not think I am just blustering when I scold you in my letters.

MLB:BV neither would I appear as wanting to terrify you with my letters.

CJB My object is not to seem as if I were trying to frighten you with these letters.

NJB into letting you think that I can put fear into you only by letter.

EXPNT I do not want you to think I am trying to scare you with my letters.

REB So you must not think of me as one who tries to scare you by the letters he writes.

ESV I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters.

CSB I don't want to seem as though I am trying to terrify you with my letters.

KJV That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

- **terrify**: 2Co 10:10 1Co 4:5,19-21

### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 7:2-3 (**PAUL'S HEART WAS NOT TO TERRIFY BUT TO SHOW HIS LOVE!**) Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. 3 I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. (HE LOVED THEM ENOUGH TO DIE FOR THEM!)

2 Corinthians 11:11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

2 Corinthians 12:15) I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

## PAUL DID NOT USE SCARE TACTICS

**Scare tactics** are ways of achieving a particular result by frightening people so much that they do what you want them to do:

**For** - Harris says this **for** (term of explanation) writing that "However legitimately Paul may have boasted about his God-given

authority, he decides to refrain from expanding his simple claim in v. 8 lest he appear to be frightening the Corinthians into submission by "weighty and forceful" letters (vv. 9, 10a). ([1 and 2 Corinthians The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

Recall their accusation against him in 2Co 10:1 that he was "bold toward you when absent!" He did not want to ["add fuel to that fire!"](#)

**I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters-** NLT is an accurate paraphrase "I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters." **Terrify** is ekphobeo (ek = out + phobeo = fear > ["scare out of one's wits"](#)), a very strong verb only here in the Bible, meaning to cause one to be intensely afraid. Undoubtedly this statement addresses the accusations and/or [insinuations](#) by Paul's opponents that he was domineering, intimidating and abusive. This might refer specifically to the so-called "severe letter," but they could have even pointed to the first letter with statements like "What do you desire? Shall **I come to you with a rod**, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?" (1Co 4:21) That statement could easily be twisted into a threat calculated to terrify the Corinthian readers. [See the passages](#) above that reflect the true heart for the Corinthians. Yes, Paul had indeed made the Corinthians sorrowful, but he had a high and holy purpose, desiring for them to experience the freedom of genuine repentance

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. 10 For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.(2Co 7:9-10)

**P E Hughes** - This is an effective thrust, for the picture of Paul, whom they knew so well, acting the part of a distant despot terrorizing them by his correspondence must have struck the Corinthians as altogether ridiculous. As a riposte to the calumnies of those who were defaming him in Corinth it was both adroit and legitimate. The particular slander in question was in fact most damaging to his authority. It was being said that between the tone of his letters and the manner of his conduct when present there existed the greatest discrepancy, that the former was impressive and forceful, whereas the latter was marked by weakness and indecision. The charge, in short, was one of radical inconsistency and inconstancy. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**2 Corinthians 10:10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."**

NIV For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."

AMP For they say, His letters are weighty and impressive and forceful and telling, but his personality and bodily presence are weak, and his speech and delivery are utterly contemptible (of no account).

NLT For some say, "Paul's letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches are worthless!"

NRSV For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

NTMS:ITEETRGT For they say, "his letters are authoritative and forcible, but his personal presence is unimpressive, and as to eloquence, he has none."

YLT 'because the letters indeed—saith one—are weighty and strong, and the bodily presence weak, and the speech despicable.'

NEB 'His letters', so it is said, 'are weighty and powerful; but when he appears he has no presence, and as a speaker he is beneath contempt.'

NET because some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is weak and his speech is of no account."

The Living Bible "Don't bother about his letters," some say. "He sounds big, but it's all noise. When he gets here you will see that there is nothing great about him, and you have never heard a worse preacher!"

MLB:BV For, "His letters," they say, "are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is insignificant and his speech is contemptible."

The Message "His letters are brawny and potent, but in person he's a weakling and mumbles when he talks."

CJB Someone says, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but when he appears in person he is weak, and as a speaker he is nothing."

EXPNT Some people say, "Paul's letters are powerful and sound important, but when he is with us, he is weak. And his speaking is nothing."

REB 'His letters', so it is said, 'are weighty and powerful; but when he is present he is unimpressive, and as a speaker he is beneath contempt.'

ESV For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."

MEV "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

EMPH Because The letters, it is true (saith one), are weighty and strong, But the presence of the body is weak, and the discourse contemptible;—

CSB For it is said, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his physical presence is weak and his public speaking amounts to nothing."

NCPB 'For his letters,' say they, 'are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.'

GNB Someone will say, "Paul's letters are severe and strong, but when he is with us in person, he is weak, and his words are nothing!"

NKJV "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

KJV 1900 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

- **they:** Gr. saith he, 2Co 10:11
- **but:** 2Co 10:1 2Co 12:5-9 1Co 2:3,4 Ga 4:13,14
- **and his:** 2Co 11:6 Ex 4:10 Jer 1:6 1Co 1:17,21 2:1-4

## **STRONG LETTERS WEAK CHARISMA**

**For they say, "His letters are weighty ([barus](#)) and strong ([ischuros](#)) - N J B** = Someone said, 'His letters are weighty enough, and full of strength.'" **TLB** = "Don't bother about his letters," some say. "He sounds big, but it's all noise." There is certainly some truth in this statement, for Paul did not hold back when addressing sin and discord in the church in his first letter.

It could not be denied that some of his letters were "**weighty ([barus](#)) and strong ([ischuros](#))**" as in the strong command about handing men over to Satan for the destruction of their flesh (1Co 5:5; cf. Acts 13:11; 1Ti 1:20), but his actions would authenticate his words.

**A T Robertson on weighty and strong** - These adjectives can be uncomplimentary and mean "severe and violent" instead of "impressive and vigorous." The adjectives bear either sense. . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**but his personal presence is unimpressive ([asthenes](#))**(KJV - "his bodily presence is weak") **and his speech contemptible ([exoutheneo](#))** - **NIV** = "but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing." **NJB** = "but when you see him in person, he makes no impression and his powers of speaking are negligible." **TLB** = "When he gets here you will see that there is nothing great about him, and you have never heard a worse preacher!" The opponents knew how much the Corinthians esteemed brilliant oratory, so here they attempt to disparage his ability to speak. They were saying in a sense his "[bite did not match his bark!](#)"

**A T Robertson on his personal presence is unimpressive** (KJV - "his bodily presence is weak") - This certainly is uncomplimentary. "The presence of his body." It seems clear that Paul did not have a commanding appearance like that of Barnabas (Acts 14:12). He had some physical defect of the eyes (Galatians 4:14) and a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7). In the second century Acts of Paul and Thecla he is pictured as small, short, bow-legged, with eye-brows knit together, and an aquiline nose. A forgery of the fourth century in the name of Lucian describes Paul as "the bald-headed, hook-nosed Galilean." However that may be, his accusers sneered at his personal appearance as "weak" . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Kruse on unimpressive** - may reflect his opponents' reaction to a physical ailment which was never healed (cf. 2Co 12:7-9; Gal. 4:15), or his unimpressive physical make-up (cf. *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 3: 'a man of small stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked'), or most likely to what they regarded as a lack of a commanding presence because Paul did not provide *displays* of authority and spiritual charismata. (Online [Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Henry Morris** - Paul was evidently small and unimpressive in appearance, though certainly not a weakling (in view of the many hardships he had to overcome). Neither was he an eloquent orator. He probably would seem outwardly to compare very unfavorably to many charismatic preachers and evangelists today. Nevertheless, by both his spiritual power and his intellectual ability, he was probably the most effective missionary who ever lived. And his writings, of course, the so-called Pauline epistles, are indeed "weighty and powerful"—among the greatest ever written, even by secular standards.

**A T Robertson on his speech contemptible** - Perfect passive participle of [exoutheneo](#), to treat as nothing (cf. 1Co. 1:28). The Corinthians (some of them) cared more for the brilliant eloquence of Apollos and did not find Paul a trained rhetorician (1Co 1:17; 1Co 2:1, 4; 2Co 11:6). He made different impressions on different people. "*Seldom has anyone been at once so ardently hated and so passionately loved as St. Paul*" (Deissmann, *St. Paul*, p. 70). "*At one time he seemed like a man, and at another he seemed like an angel*" (*Acts of Paul and Thecla*). He spoke like a god at Lystra (Acts 14:8-12), but Eutychus went to sleep on him (Acts 20:9). Evidently Paul winced under this biting criticism of his looks and speech. (**ED: WOULDN'T YOU? - RHETORICAL!**) . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Gilbrant** - They claimed when he was in residence at Corinth his bodily presence (parousia) was weak and most unimpressive. Again they misinterpreted the meekness and gentleness of Christ which he possessed by the power of the Spirit (10:1).

He himself said he was "unskilled in speech" (2Co 11:6). And so there was some truth in what his opponents said, but they neglected to emphasize that Paul's goal was not self-glorification but "Gospel-glorification" even as he wrote in his first letter

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (1 Cor. 2:1-5+)

As **Hughes** says "Anything that might distract his hearers' attention from or overlay the dynamic truth of his message was to be avoided at all costs. It was essential that their faith should stand, "not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God". " ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

---

**Unimpressive** (sick, weak) ([772](#)) [asthenes](#) from a = without + sthénos = strength, bodily vigor) (See study of related verb *astheneo* - note the concentration of *asthenes/astheneo* in the epistles to the Corinthians - almost 50% of NT uses) is literally without strength or bodily vigor. *Asthenes* describes one's state of limited capacity to do or be something and is used literally of physical weakness (most of the uses in the Gospels) and figuratively of weakness in the spiritual arena (weak flesh, weak conscience, weak religious system or commandment [Gal 4:9, Heb 7:18], etc) and thus powerlessness to produce results.

**Contemptible** ([1848](#)) [exoutheneo](#) from **ek** = an intensifies + **outhenéo** = bring to naught) is a strong verb which means to despise someone or something on basis that it is worthless or of no value. To consider as nothing. To treat someone contemptuously as if completely worthless or despicable. To treat something or someone with contempt or to treat as of no account. To set at naught. To make something of no account (disregard, disdain, reject with contempt, despise).

**2 Corinthians 10:11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.**

AMP Let such people realize that what we say by letters when we are absent, [we put] also into deeds when we are present—

NLT Those people should realize that our actions when we arrive in person will be as forceful as what we say in our letters from far away.

NRSV Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.

NEB People who talk in that way should reckon with this: when I come, my actions will show the same man as

my letters showed in my absence.

NET Let such a person consider this: What we say by letters when we are absent, we also are in actions when we are present.

NJB We are not venturing to rank ourselves, or even to compare ourselves with certain people who provide their own commendations. By measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves to themselves, they only show their folly.

REB We should not dare to class ourselves or compare ourselves with any of those who commend themselves. What fools they are to measure themselves on their own, to find in themselves their standard of comparison!

- such: 2Co 12:20 13:2,3,10 1Co 4:19,20

## PAUL DENIES HE WAS TWO FACED

**Two-faced** means duplicitous, habitually presenting a different version of oneself at different times, acting one way in certain situations and then in a contrary manner in others.

**Swindoll** - In technological lingo, we often see the term **WYSIWYG**—an acronym for “what you see is what you get.” This is particularly important in desktop publishing with the desire for the layout on the computer screen to look exactly the same as what the printer spits out. As far as Paul’s ministry was concerned, it was WYSIWYG. Paul was Paul—whether in their midst or through his letters ([Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians](#))

**Let such a person consider (logizomai) this** - It is as if he has a particular unnamed individual in mind, perhaps the lead spokesman of his accusers. To this person he gives a command in the [present imperative](#). Put the following truth into your mind and “calculate” ([logizomai](#)) what it means. Paul is not playing word games but word war! He is in effect using his pen as a “battering ram” to destroy fortresses and speculations (2Co 10:4-5+)

**Hughes** - Like so many who judge things according to the outward display of this world, Paul's opponents interpreted meekness as weakness, forbearance as cowardice, and gentleness as indecision (cf. v. 1; 2Co 11:21 )-or at least they had sought to induce the Corinthians to place this interpretation on Paul's character." ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**That what we are in word (logos) by letters (epistole) when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present (pareimi)** - Paul directly refutes the accusation that he was “meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!” (2Co 10:1) Paul was not duplicitous. His words matched his words, whether absent or present.

**THOUGHT** - Do my works match my words? Could I with confidence and clear conscience say “Yes?”

**A T Robertson** on Paul's quality in his letters when absent (apontes) and in his deeds when present (parontes - [pareimi](#)) is precisely the same. . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Kruse** - The one who writes the strong letters is prepared to stand up to his critics when he comes on the third visit. No-one should mistake his efforts to be conciliatory as evidence that he lacks authority. (Online [Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians 10](#))

**2 Corinthians 10:12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.**

NIV 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.

AMP Not that we [have the audacity to] venture to class or [even to] compare ourselves with some who exalt and furnish testimonials for themselves! However, when they measure themselves with themselves and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding and behave unwisely.

NLT Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!



NEB We should not dare to class ourselves or compare ourselves with any of those who put forward their own claims. What fools they are to measure themselves by themselves, to find in themselves their own standard of comparison!

The Living Bible Oh, don't worry, I wouldn't dare say that I am as wonderful as these other men who tell you how good they are! Their trouble is that they are only comparing themselves with each other and measuring themselves against their own little ideas. What stupidity!

The Message We're not, understand, putting ourselves in a league with those who boast that they're our superiors. We wouldn't dare do that. But in all this comparing and grading and competing, they quite miss the point.

CJB We don't dare class or compare ourselves with some of the people who advertise themselves. In measuring themselves against each other and comparing themselves with each other, they are simply stupid.

Phillips Of course we shouldn't dare include ourselves in the same class as those who write their own testimonials, or even to compare ourselves with them! All they are doing, of course, is to measure themselves by their own standards or by comparisons within their own circle, and that doesn't make for accurate estimation, you may be sure.

- **we are not bold to class or compare ourselves** 2Co 3:1 5:12 Job 12:2 Pr 25:27 27:2 Lu 18:11 Ro 15:18
- **they are without understanding** Pr 26:12

#### Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 3:1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?

### USING THE FALSE STANDARD OF HUMAN COMPARISONS

Paul now takes the offensive. In this passage he uses sarcasm which is a sharp, often satirical or ironic utterance designed to mock or convey contempt.

**THOUGHT** - Spiritual principle from this passage = avoid human comparisons!

**For we are** (ou - absolutely) **not bold** ([tolmao](#)) **to class or compare** (sunkrino) **ourselves with some of those who commend** ([sunistemi/sunistao](#)) **themselves - Amplified** - "Not that we [have the audacity to] venture to class or [even to] compare ourselves with some who exalt and furnish testimonials for themselves!" **Phillips Paraphrase** = "Of course we shouldn't dare include ourselves in the same class as those who write their own testimonials, or even to compare ourselves with them!" **TLB** = "Oh, don't worry, I wouldn't dare say that I am as wonderful as these other men who tell you how good they are!" **Class** is egkrino used only here in the Bible and conveying the meaning of classing someone in a certain group or consider them as belonging to that group.

Paul is describing his opponents as those is a "[mutual admiration society](#)." Paul refuses to compare himself with His self-commending opponents, for they are using a false standard. When you write your own letter of recommendation, that is a major problem, not to mention pure presumption! Possibly some were accusing Paul of not be bold or courageous enough to even try to compare himself with them.

Paul, guided by the Spirit, adopted the basic classical understanding. He did not want to "reckon himself among" those who were "self-endorsing" (literally "who commend themselves"). Paul did not wish to be considered a part of that group which boasted of its own success. Paul wanted, rather, to confine his boasting "to the field God has assigned" (2 Corinthians 10:13NIV).

**Kruse** - A popular method used by teachers to attract pupils in Paul's day was to compare themselves with other teachers (cf. *Oxyrhynchus Papyrus*, 2190). (Online [Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Guzik** - There are many who are ready to commend themselves; most do not do it publicly but do it privately in their own minds. "They are also full of pride and self-conceit; they look within themselves for accomplishments which their self-love will soon find out; for to it real and fictitious are the same." (Clarke) ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Gromacki** - The Judaizing critic, however, delighted in making such comparisons. First, he compared himself with his own self-appointed standard of excellence ("make ourselves of the number," egkrinai). This was introspection. Second, he compared himself with others ("with some that commend themselves," sugkrinai). This was competition. If a person adopts low standards for himself,

he can usually meet them. If a person selects someone inferior with whom he can compare himself, he is bound to see himself as better ([Stand Firm in the Faith](#))

**Trapp** offers a good perspective - "Oh, pray to be preserved from this perilous pinnacle of self-exaltation. Look into the perfect law of liberty, and draw nigh to God. The nearer we come to God, the more rottenness we find in our bones." ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**P E Hughes** - Paul now indulges in a note of sarcasm. Though defending his own boldness and disavowing the timidity of cowardice, he declares with strong irony that there are, however, limits to his boldness: he would not be so daring as to put himself on an equality or even to compare himself with certain individuals whose daring is so extraordinary that they rest their authority upon self-commendation! That is a boldness with which he does not compete! Always Paul was acutely conscious that, in himself, he was utterly unworthy of God's call to apostleship, that everything he was he owed entirely to the sovereign grace of God (cf. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:9f., 3:6f.; Eph. 3:7f.). His commendation, his authority, was of God, not of men, and least of all of self...these men are so puffed up with arrogant ambition and self-esteem that self is their only measure of authority and their sole standard of comparison. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**But when they measure ([metreo](#)) themselves by themselves and compare (sunkrino) themselves with themselves, they are (ou = absolutely) without understanding ([suniemi](#))** - NLT = "But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!" **Phillips** = " All they are doing, of course, is to measure themselves by their own standards or by comparisons within their own circle, and that doesn't make for accurate estimation, you may be sure."

Paul disassociates himself with those who "measure" their character relatively, in relation to others but do not use the standard that is eternal and unchanging, Christ Jesus! The standards his opponents are using were invented by themselves and they took pride in meeting those human standards. This is why they thought so highly of themselves. Clearly they did not know or understand the proverb which says "Do you see a man wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him." (Pr 26:12) They were **without understanding** of Biblical, spiritual truth for they were without the Spirit of Truth!

**A T Robertson on measure themselves by themselves** - Or "in themselves." Keenest sarcasm. Setting themselves up as the standards of orthodoxy these Judaizers always measure up to the standard while Paul falls short. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Guzik** - This means two things. First, it means making yourself the measure of others. Second, it means making others the measure of yourself.. This was wrong for at least two reasons. First, there did not seem to be a lot of really spiritual people among the Corinthian Christians to give a good comparison to. How much of a compliment could it have been to be the most spiritual person among the Corinthians? Secondly, it was wrong because it only measured on a human scale, focused on outward appearance. When we let the Holy Spirit measure us through God's Word, He measures us on God's scale, and He looks at the heart. This needs to be communicated to pastors and church leaders today: Stop measuring yourself by yourselves. Stop comparing yourselves among yourselves. We should not make ourselves the measure of others, feeling we are superior to them if, by outward appearance, we are more successful. On the other side, we should not make others our measure, feeling we are failures if – by outward appearance – they are more successful. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**William MacDonald** - It should be obvious that if a person's only standard is himself, then he is always right! There is no room for improvement. Those who do this **are not wise**. As has been well said, "It is the bane of all cliques and coteries to ignore all excellence out of their own party." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**A T Robertson on they are without understanding** - The regular form for present active indicative third plural of [suniemi](#), to comprehend, to grasp....It is a hard thing to see, but it is true. These men do not see their own picture so obvious to others (Ep 5:17; 1Ti 1:7 cf Mk 8:17). . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Swindoll** has some sobering words for all in ministry - I have never seen such vicious and ambitious competition in ministry as I see today in North American Christianity. So many pastors—especially younger ones—compete for the limelight, trying to grow bigger, look better, come across as edgier, cooler, more relevant. Ultimately, they won't be able to keep up the charade. It takes an incredible amount of energy to pretend to be something that you are not. People need to be who they are. They need to get out of the way and turn the spotlights back onto Jesus. I would say to any and all in ministry, point your fans in His direction, and model authenticity, even if it means people will no longer embrace you as some sort of semidivine superstar. After all, you're not! ([Insights on 1 & 2 Corinthians](#))

**McGee** quips "Paul is injecting a little note of humor. A great many folk compare themselves among themselves, which is the reason that many people in our churches think they have arrived. They feel they are really fine, outstanding, spiritual Christians because they compare themselves with other Christians in their group. That is not the yardstick we are to use, my friend. This is one of the tragedies of the hour. A person can be in a cold church and grow cold himself and yet not be conscious of it because he compares himself with the cold Christians around him. We all need to be around other Christians who challenge us. There are too many Christians who are in some little clique or group or church, and they feel smug and satisfied because they are all in the same boat."

**Reformation Study Bible.** Now the matter surfaces that caused Paul to defend his apostleship so vigorously. Encouraged by rival "apostles," some influential Corinthians had begun to compare these latecomers to Paul—with Paul coming out the loser. He was judged deficient as a speaker (2Co 10:10; 11:5), weak in his relationship with the church (vacillating between boldness while absent and timidity when present, 2Co 10:10, 11), unloving toward them (in refusing a monetary gift which, in their view, snubbed them as inferiors, 2Co 11:7-11; 12:14-18), and deficient in certain religious experiences of "power" (2Co 12:1-5 and notes). But Paul refuses to compare himself with his opponents on their shabby terms of self-boasting and self-promotion. When he yields and boasts to them (2Co 11:16-18), he does so ironically, using the form of comparison but always refusing their false values. ([2 Cor 10:12](#))

---

**Wiersbe - How to Measure Spiritual Ministry** (2 Cor. 10:12-18) I suppose more problems have been caused by people "measuring the ministry" than by any other activity in the church. If the work of the church is the work of God, and if the work of God is a miracle, how do we go about measuring a miracle? In His personal examination of the seven churches named in Revelation 2-3, the Lord Jesus measured them far differently than they measured themselves. The church that thought it was poor, He considered to be rich; and the church that boasted of its wealth, He declared to be poor (Rev. 2:8-11; 3:14-22). Some people measure ministry only by statistics. While it is true that the early church did take note of numbers (Acts 2:41; 4:4), it is also true that uniting with the church at that time was a much more difficult (and dangerous) thing (see Acts 5:13). Some years ago, one of America's large denominations had as its theme, "A Million More in '64, and Every One a Tither!" I heard one of their leading preachers comment, "If we get a million more like the last million, God help us!" Quantity is no guarantee of quality. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

---

### **David Jeremiah - COMPARED WITH WHAT?**

2 CORINTHIANS 10:12NIV We do not care 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.

I'm always a little surprised when I hear someone comment that they cannot understand why God would do something for Mr. and Mrs. Someone and not for them. But the comment that shocks me is when they say, "It isn't fair."

The hard truth is, we ought to be asking why God would ever do anything for any of us. As Jeremiah wrote, "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22).

The only thing we "deserve" is His wrath. Whatever talent or ability we may develop or position we may achieve, it is only because of God's great grace.

I love Paul's gentle sarcasm when he writes: "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" (2 Corinthians 10:12 NIV). Today, thank Him for who you are and every blessing He has provided. ([Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#))

---

**Compare** (4793)(**sunkrino** from **sun** = with + **krino** = judge) means to join together, combine (1Co 2:13 = "combing"), to interpret, to compare. (1) of things brought together for explanation interpret, explain, combine (1Co 2.13); (2) of persons set together for comparison (2Co 10:12), (Friberg [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**Only 2 NT uses** - 1 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 10:12. Uses in Septuagint - Gen. 40:8; Gen. 40:16; Gen. 40:22; Gen. 41:12; Gen. 41:13; Gen. 41:15; Num. 15:34; Dan. 5:7; Dan. 5:12; Da 5:16

**Sunkrinō** is found frequently in classical literature meaning "to combine or bring into combination, to compare," and rarely, "to interpret." The former meaning is found in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* in terms of the combination of the basic elements. The second meaning is also found in Aristotle, among others, and has more of the suggestion of comparing things nearly equal (so also Büchsel, "sunkrinō," Kittel, 3:953). In the papyri the word is preserved mainly in judicial documents where sunkrinō basically has the idea of "to decide" (cf. Moulton-Milligan) in terms of giving a decision to a case.

The translation "to interpret" occurs in the Septuagint where sunkrinō is used to translate the Hebrew pāthar, "to interpret" or "to solve." This meaning is found primarily in the Joseph narrative in Genesis (40:8, 16, 22; 41:12, 13, 15) and in Daniel (5:7, there translating the Aramaic form of the verb, pēshar). In Genesis 40 and 41 Joseph interpreted a series of dreams first for his fellow prisoners and then for Pharaoh. In Daniel 5:7 King Belshazzar asked his court magicians to interpret the writing on the wall. They were unable to do so, but recommended Daniel as one known for his "interpretations" (Daniel 5:12, sunkrimata). In the apocryphal books sunkrinō occurs in *Wisdom of Solomon* 7:29; 15:18; and *1 Maccabees* 10:71. In *Wisdom* 7:29 wisdom is "compared" to the sun and found superior. In 15:18 the word is translated in the RSV as "judged," but carries a sense of comparison (and the results

found wanting). Similarly, in 1 Maccabees 10:71 the governor, Apollonius, challenges Jonathan, the Jewish leader, to “match” forces in open battle. Again, the sense of comparison remains.

This latter sense is clearly the point in 2 Corinthians 10:12. Paul here used *enkrinein* (see 1462) and *sunkrinein* together. The former has the idea of “classing someone with someone.” In the second part of the verse *metrountes* and *sunkrinontes* are used in parallel—meaning “measuring” and “comparing.” The point is that Paul did not want to “class” or “measure” himself by his rival’s standards for themselves. They, indeed, “compared” themselves to themselves and had scope for boasting, while Paul measured himself according to the limits God had set for him, and preferred to talk about his hope for God’s commendation (2 Corinthians 10:13ff.). The other New Testament occurrence of *sunkrinō* is not nearly so clear. In 1 Corinthians 2:13 Paul contrasted the wisdom and knowledge given by the Spirit with wisdom gained through human teachings and logic. He described this Spirit-taught wisdom as *pneumatikōis pneumatika sunkrinontes*. Two problems exist here—the meaning of *pneumatikōis* (either “with spiritual things” or “to spiritual men”) and the meaning of the participle *sunkrinontes* (either “interpreting” or “comparing”). The verse could be read “interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people” or “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” Because the constant emphasis in 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 is the distinction between the world of human wisdom and thinking, the idea of “comparing” is certainly possible. Still, the emphasis on teaching and understanding what is taught in 1 Corinthians 2:1–12 probably best supports the RSV translation, “interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit” (see Barrett, *Harper’s New Testament Commentaries*, First Corinthians, p.76).

**Measure** (3354) **metreo** means (1). take the dimensions of, measure literally (Rev 11:1f; Rev 21:15–17) or figuratively (2 Cor 10:12) and (2) give out, deal out, apportion (Mt 7:2; Mk 4:24; Lk 6:38) English = metric. The nine occurrences of *metreō* in the New Testament reflect a variety of usages. In the Synoptics, **metreō** is used figuratively as a “measure” of judgment. Jesus warned His disciples not to judge others, for the attitude they had toward others would affect the divine judgment they would receive (Matthew 7:2; Mark 4:24; Luke 6:38). Paul’s use of **metreō** reflects a similar figurative sense as found in the Synoptics. In Revelation each use of **metreo** describes a “measure” of space (e.g., the “temple of God,” Rev 11:1; the “new Jerusalem,” Rev 21:15–17).

---

## The Right Comparison

Comparing themselves among themselves, [they] are not wise. —2 Corinthians 10:12

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

When I was working my way through school, I washed walls and windows in people’s homes. At one new job, a 4-foot-tall man greeted me at the door. He told me he had to hire someone to clean his windows because they were too high for him to reach. Although I’m only 5’ 7”, in his home I felt like a giant. In God’s eyes, of course, our physical stature means nothing.

Some people in the church mistakenly think of themselves as spiritual giants. These “big fish in a small pond” may feel they are superior because of their position. Of this misguided self-promotion, Paul wrote, “Comparing themselves among themselves, [they] are not wise” (2 Cor. 10:12).

Others may feel their spiritual growth is stunted because they don’t play a visible role. This is also wrong. Sometimes those who are growing the most may feel inferior to those who maintain a hypocritical façade of legalistic perfection. Spiritual comparisons are always unwise. Only the Lord is the true judge of spiritual growth.

Physical stature doesn’t matter, but our spiritual standing does. If you are feeling spiritually superior or inferior, ask God to give you the proper attitude. He is the true judge of the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Comparing your life with someone you see  
Is not a fulfilling quest,  
For Jesus’ own words are “Follow Me.”  
And that’s how to know life’s best. —Hess

No deception is more dangerous than self-deception.

---

## Compared With What?

We dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. —2 Cor. 10:12

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

I remember that when I was in the 6th grade I used to look with admiration and awe at high school football players. They were old

enough to be heroes, and as far as I was concerned they were the biggest, fastest, and toughest guys around. But now I realize that it all depends on whose team you're playing for. Compared with the college or professional athletes of today, those fellows don't even rate.

Most things in life are like that. Whether we are healthy, muscular, attractive, or successful is relative. It all depends. With whom are we comparing ourselves?

So, with whom are we measuring ourselves as Christians? According to the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 10, we make a big mistake if we try to feel good about ourselves by comparing ourselves with the people around us (v.12). There's no future in that kind of thinking. You see, ultimately the value and meaning of anything in life depends on how the Lord sees us. Paul wrote that it's not the one who commends himself who is approved, "but whom the Lord commends" (v.18). It's God's judgment that really matters.

Paul was content to serve his Savior faithfully and leave any praise of his life and work to God. Can the same be said of us? By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Just live your life before your Lord,  
It matters not what others do—  
Your actions will be weighed by Him  
Who metes out judgment just and true. —Roe

If you must compare yourself with someone, compare yourself with Christ.

---

### Growth Chart

The growth chart had slipped from the playroom wall because the tape on its corners had become dry and brittle. Five-year-old Jordan hung it up again, meticulously working to get it straight. Then he stood his sister against the wall to measure her height.

"Mommy! Mommy! Anneke is forty inches tall!" he shouted as he burst into the kitchen. "I measured her."

His mom replied, "That's impossible, Sweetheart. She's only 3 years old. Let's go see."

They walked back into the playroom, where the mother's suspicions were confirmed. Despite his efforts to hang the chart straight, Jordan had failed to set it at the proper height. It was several inches low.

We easily make Jordan's mistake in gauging our spiritual growth or importance. Compared to a shortened scale, we may appear better than we are. Only when we stand against the Cross, that "great leveler or men" as A. T. Robertson called it, can we not think of ourselves "more highly than we ought to think." Christ, himself, must be our standard. Robert H. Heijermans,

---

### FEAR GOD -

But they, measuring ... and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise (2 Corinthians 10:12).

A little boy announced to his mother, "I'm like Goliath. I'm nine feet tall." "What makes you say that?" asked his mother. The tyke replied, "Well, I made a little ruler and measured myself with it, and I am nine feet tall!"

Although the child's measurements were accurate, his ruler was defective. He was like many people who fail to see their need of salvation because they measure themselves by a faulty standard. By looking at their peers and comparing their own behavior with others who have done worse than they have, they conclude that they are not so bad after all. But such pride is demolished when people compare themselves with a perfect standard of righteousness.

When the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord in all His glory, he ex-claimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts". (Isaiah 6:5). And according to Romans 3:23, we all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. These two verses reveal how we measure up spiritually in God's sight.

Those who have never given their lives to Christ, and who recognize how far short of God's standard they fall, can place their trust in Christ and enjoy the true righteousness found in Him. When we measure our morality against that of other sinners, we are "not wise." We are using the wrong standard of measurement. —R. W. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If we could merit our own salvation, Christ would not have died to provide it.

**2 Corinthians 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.**

NIV We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

AMP We, on the other hand, will not boast beyond our legitimate province and proper limit, but will keep within the limits [of our commission which] God has allotted us as our measuring line and which reaches and includes even you.

NLT We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you.

Phillips No, we shall not make any wild claims, but simply judge ourselves by that line of duty which God has marked out for us, and that line includes our work on your behalf.

NRSV We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.

NEB With us there will be no attempt to boast beyond our proper sphere; and our sphere is determined by the limit God laid down for us, which permitted us to come as far as Corinth.

NET But we will not boast beyond certain limits, but will confine our boasting according to the limits of the work to which God has appointed us, that reaches even as far as you.

The Living Bible But we will not boast of authority we do not have. Our goal is to measure up to God's plan for us, and this plan includes our working there with you.

The Message We aren't making outrageous claims here. We're sticking to the limits of what God has set for us. But there can be no question that those limits reach to and include you.

- we will not: 2Co 10:15 Pr 25:14
- according: 2Co 10:14 Mt 25:15 Ro 12:6 15:20 1Co 12:11 Eph 4:7 1Pe 4:10
- rule: or, line, Ps 19:4 Isa 28:17 Ro 10:18

**Related Passages:**

Acts 9:15 **(PAUL'S SPHERE OF MINISTRY)** (But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

Acts 22:21 **(PAUL'S SPHERE OF MINISTRY)** "And He said to me, 'Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Romans 1:5 **(PAUL'S SPHERE OF MINISTRY)** through Whom **we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles** for His name's sake,

Romans 11:13 **(PAUL'S SPHERE OF MINISTRY)** But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry,

1 Timothy 2:7 **(PAUL'S SPHERE OF MINISTRY)** For this I was appointed a preacher and **an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) as a teacher of the Gentiles** in faith and truth.

2 Timothy 1:11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher.

**RESIST INACCURATE  
EXAGGERATIONS**

**But** - Paul contrasts himself with his opponents who were commending themselves.

**THOUGHT** - Spiritual principle from this passage = do not make exaggerations about your ministry.

**MacArthur** gives some background - False teachers tend to be megalomaniacs, who become enraged at those who would limit their grandiose designs. They continually seek to widen their influence and gain greater prestige, fame, and wealth. To that end, they often overstate or even falsify their qualifications and gifts. The false apostles presented the Corinthians with a rather amazing

resumé. They claimed greater power, erudition, oratorical skills, and influence than Paul. They then used those phony credentials to gain influence in the Corinthian assembly. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**We will not boast ([kauchaomai](#)) beyond our measure - Phillips** = "No, we shall not make any wild claims." The implication is that his opponent boasting was "out of control." For example, they may have been taking credit for spiritual effects in the church to which they had made no contribution. Paul would make no boast that was not true in an attempt to fight off the lies and exaggerations of the false teachers.

**Gilbrant** - They refused to recognize they had entered into other men's labors. Not even the 12 apostles could claim their work was totally of themselves. Jesus said to them, "I sent you to reap that whereupon ye bestowed no labor" (John 4:38).

**Wiersbe** - Churches and ministers are not competing with each other; they are competing with themselves. God is not going to measure us on the basis of the gifts and opportunities that He gave to Charles Spurgeon or Billy Sunday. He will measure my work by what He assigned to me. God requires faithfulness above everything else (1 Cor. 4:2). There is something intimidating about attending a pastors' conference or a denominational convention, because the people on the program are usually the "front-runners" with the best records. Young pastors and older men in narrow places often go home carrying feelings of guilt because their faithful work does not seem to produce as much fruit. Some of these discouraged men then try all lands of programs and promotions, only to have more disappointment; and then they contemplate leaving the ministry. If only they would realize that God measures their ministries on the basis of where He has put them, and not on the basis of what is going on in some other city, it would encourage them to stay on the job and keep being faithful. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**But within the measure ([metron](#)) of the sphere ([kanon](#)) which God apportioned ([merizo](#)) to us as a measure ([metron](#)) - Amplified** = "will keep within the limits [of our commission which] God has allotted us as our measuring line." **NLT** = "We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us" **But** introduces the contrasting attitude of Paul, so instead of making unsubstantiated claims, Paul was content to stay within the **sphere** or bounds of the ministry to which he had been called, "that line of duty which God has marked out for" him (Phillips). Paul was not "out of bounds" as the false teachers may have claimed but knew his sphere of ministry included Corinth (and Achaia).

**Gilbrant on sphere** - Paul employed the word in reference to the "sphere" or "limits" of his ministry among the Corinthians. The term here carries a distinct geographic nuance according to some exegetes; others believe *kanōn* here has a nuance of "standard" or "rule" in reference not to a geographic limit but to God's granting to Paul the "grace" to perform missionary activity at all

**Reformation Study Bible** - Paul will take credit only for things that God has permitted him to do, but this includes having come to Corinth as their apostle. He implies that the opponents in Corinth with their boasting were intruding into his area of responsibility. ([2 Cor 10:13](#))

**MacArthur** - The apostle again demonstrated his humility by refusing to boast of his own accomplishments, preferring to speak only of what Christ had done through him (Ro 15:18; Col 1:29). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**P E Hughes** - The picture Paul has in mind is that of a course measured out by God for each of His servants—and, more particularly here for each of His apostles. These intruders, however, had not been chosen of God; no sphere or track had been divinely marked out for them, certainly not in Corinth. The claims they were boastfully making were, therefore, entirely without foundation. Paul, on the other hand, confines his glorying to what are its only legitimate limits, namely, the course of evangelism which God, not self, had so clearly marked out for him and which, in the dispensation of God's strategic will, had brought him even as far as Corinth (the farthest point West which he had so far reached with the gospel). In coming to the Corinthians he had not overrun the prescribed limits, as would have been the case had the course appointed him by God not reached as far as them. The others who had come to them were unauthorized interlopers who had illegally trespassed on the lane marked out, not for them, but for him. ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians -- The New International Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**Guzik** - The idea of the limits of the sphere comes from the lanes that were allotted for runners in a race. The Corinthians would recognize this because they loved races and held the famous Isthmian Games in Corinth. Paul is saying, "I'm running in my own lane and not in someone else's.". All godly authority has a sphere. It is important for the person in authority to not exercise that authority outside the sphere, and it is important for the person under authority to recognize the sphere of authority they are under. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**To reach even as far as you** - He is referring to this ministry in Corinth, or as **NLT** says "our working with you." Corinth was the **sphere** which God had **apportioned** to him in which he was to carry out the good works of ministry. Paul knew where God had good works prepared for him. This reminds me of Ephesians 2:10 where Paul gives the general guidelines for the sphere of ministry apportioned to EVERY believer. Paul writes that "we (NOTE HE INCLUDES HIMSELF) are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand (OUR "SPHERE") so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+)

**Gilbrant** has an excellent point - Paul's original call sent him to Gentiles and kings as well as to the Children of Israel, with emphasis on the former (Acts 9:15+). Once in the early part of his ministry he thought he might do a profitable work among his own people in the Jerusalem area. To emphasize the intended direction of his missionary call, the Lord said to him, "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21+). The rule for him was clear. His mission was to preach the gospel in virgin territory, where Christ had never been named (Romans 15:20). God did not intend him to labor where other preachers had already worked. His assignment was that of planting new churches, not to build on another's foundation. This designated sphere of influence had brought the apostle to Corinth. When he worshipfully recalled what the Lord did through him in founding the church there, he spoke justifiably of things within the limits God had set for him. ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

---

**Warren Wiersbe** - sums up 2Co 10:13-18 - Paul suggests three questions we may ask ourselves as we seek to measure our ministries by the will of God.

- Am I where God wants me to be? (vv. 13-14)
- Is God glorified by my ministry? (vv. 15-17)
- Can the Lord commend my work? (v. 18)

---

**Sphere** (2583) **kanon** from **kane** = reed) refers to anything straight that is used to examine or measure other things. It was anything straight used in examining other things, as the tongue or needle of a balance, a plumb line in building. In Gal 6:16 it refers to a rule involving a standard for conduct. In 2 Cor 10:16 the idea of kanon is an area of activity which could be defined either geographically or functionally. **W E Vine** on **kanon** - originally denoted "a straight rod," used as a ruler or measuring instrument, or, in rare instances, "the beam of a balance," the secondary notion being either (a) of keeping anything straight, as of a rod used in weaving, or (b) of testing straightness, as a carpenter's rule; hence its metaphorical use to express what serves "to measure or determine" anything. By a common transition in the meaning of words, "that which measures," was used for "what was measured;" thus a certain space at Olympia was called a kanōn. So in music, a canon is a composition in which a given melody is the model for the formation of all the parts. In general the word thus came to serve for anything regulating the actions of men, as a standard or principle. In 2 Cor. 10:13, 15, 16, it is translated "province," RV (AV, "rule" and "line of things;" marg., "line;" RV marg., "limit" or "measuring rod.") Here it signifies the limits of the responsibility in gospel service as measured and appointed by God."

**Apportioned** (allotted),(3307) **merizo** rom **meris** = a part) means to divide, part, share, separate. To make an allotment (distribute, deal out, assign, apportion He 7:2, 2 Cor 10:13, Ro 12:3) Friberg ([Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#)) - 1) as separating into component parts divide (Mt 12.25); (2) as apportioning out something to someone distribute, divide out, assign (Ro 12.3), opposite suna.gw (gather); middle share with someone (Lk 12.13)

**2 Corinthians 10:14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ;**

Phillips We do not exceed our duty when we embrace your interests, for it was our preaching of the gospel which brought us into contact with you.

AMP For we are not overstepping the limits of our province and stretching beyond our ability to reach, as though we reached not (had no legitimate mission) to you, for we were [the very first] to come even as far as to you with the good news (the Gospel) of Christ.

NLT We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ.

NET For we were not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach as far as you, because we were the first to reach as far as you with the gospel about Christ.

The Living Bible We are not going too far when we claim authority over you, for we were the first to come to you with the Good News concerning Christ.

The Message We're not moving into someone else's "territory." We were already there with you, weren't we? We were the first ones to get there with the Message of Christ, right? So how can there be any question of overstepping our bounds by writing or visiting you?

- **not overextending ourselves** - 2Co 3:1-3 Ro 15:18,19 1Co 2:10 3:5,10 4:15 9:1,2



- **the gospel:** 2Co 4:4 Mk 1:1 Ac 20:24 Ro 1:16 2:16 16:25 Ga 1:6-8 Col 1:5 1Ti 1:11

### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 4:15+ (**PAUL PLANTED THE CHURCH AT CORINTH**) For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

2 Corinthians 3:1-3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

## GOD HAD SENT PAUL TO CORINTH

**For we are** (ou - absolutely) **not overextending ourselves** - NLT = "We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over yo" The verb **overextending** (hyperekteino) is used only here and means they were (ou - absolutely) not extending their ministry beyond or stretching out beyond the bounds that had been set by God (cf sphere in 2Co 10:13).

**Robertson on overextending** - Apparently Paul made this double compound verb (hyperekteino) to express his full meaning (only in Gregory Nazianzen afterwards). "We do not stretch ourselves out beyond our rights." . ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**As if we did not reach to you** - As if they did not have a legitimate mission in Corinth. In other words they "reached" to the sphere of ministry in Corinth.

**For** - (gar) - explains how they reached to Corinth.

**We were the first to come**([phthano](#)) **even as far as you in the Gospel** ([euaggelion](#)) **of Christ** ([Christos](#)) - Paul in essence is reminding the Corinthians that he is their "spiritual father" and they are his "spiritual children" (cf "letters" 2Co 3:1-3). In other words Paul says he was in Corinth **first** (implying before the arrival of the false teachers) and he was the first to share the Gospel of Christ with them, with the result being that God birthed the church in Corinth.

**Gospel of Christ** occurs 8x in 8v - Rom. 15:19; 1 Co. 9:12; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; Gal. 1:7; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 3:2

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term Gospel as God's glorious message of salvation for lost otherwise hopeless, helpless sinners. [Euaggelion](#) is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

1. the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23+, Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+)
2. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ
3. the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+, Ro 15:16+, 2Co 11:7+, 1Th 2:2+, 1Th 2:8,9+, 1Pe 4:17+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
4. the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16+)
5. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, Ro 1:1+),
6. the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)
7. the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+)
8. the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
9. the gospel of your salvation (Eph 1:14+)
10. the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+)
11. the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
12. the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11+)
13. In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it "**my Gospel**" indicating that the special emphasis he gave the gospel in his ministry.
14. **An eternal gospel** - Rev 14:6+ (Some writers such as C I Scofield interpret this as a "different gospel" than the other "gospels" mentioned above but I think such a distinction is incorrect and is poorly substantiated).

For a rewarding study, study the preceding references in context making notation of the truth you observe about the gospel. If you would like a special blessing, take an afternoon to go through all 76 uses of **euaggelion** in context making a list of what you learn about the gospel. The Spirit of God will enlighten your heart and encourage your spirit in a very special way...and you'll want to

share the "good news" with someone because of your "discoveries"!

**Euaggelion** - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 10:16; Rom. 11:28; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:6; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 6:15; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:12; Phil. 1:16; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:22; Phil. 4:3; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Phlm. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:6

**Were the first to come** (preceded) (5348) **phthano** means go before in time, to be beforehand or go prior to. The idea is to antedate another, which is primary meaning in this verse. **Phthano** in other contexts means to reach, to attain or to arrive at, as one would arrive at a state or a goal (Ro 9:31<sup>±</sup>, Php 3:16<sup>±</sup>). 7x in NT - Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20; Ro 9:31; 2Co. 10:14; Phil. 3:16; 1Th 2:16; 1Th 4:15

**2 Corinthians 10:15 not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you,**

Phillips Our pride is not in matters beyond our proper sphere nor in the labours of other men. No, our hope is that your growing faith will mean the expansion of our sphere of action,

NIV 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 sphere of activity among you will greatly expand,

AMP We do not boast therefore, beyond our proper limit, over other men's labors, but we have the hope and confident expectation that as your faith continues to grow, our field among you may be greatly enlarged, still within the limits of our commission,

NLT Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended.

NRSV We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged,

NEB And we do not boast of work done where others have laboured, work beyond our proper sphere. Our hope is rather that, as your faith grows, we may attain a position among you greater than ever before, but still within the limits of our sphere.

NET Nor do we boast beyond certain limits in the work done by others, but we hope that as your faith continues to grow, our work may be greatly expanded among you according to our limits,

The Living Bible It is not as though we were trying to claim credit for the work someone else has done among you. Instead, we hope that your faith will grow and that, still within the limits set for us, our work among you will be greatly enlarged.

The Message We're not barging in on the rightful work of others, interfering with their ministries, demanding a place in the sun with them. What we're hoping for is that as your lives grow in faith, you'll play a part within our expanding work.

REB And we do not boast of work done where others have laboured, work beyond our proper sphere. Our hope is rather that, as your faith grows, we may attain a position among you greater than ever before, but still within the limits of our sphere.

ESV We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged,

KJV 1900 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

■ **boasting:** 2Co 10:13 Ro 15:20

**not boasting** ([kauchaomai](#)) **beyond our measure, that is, in other men's labors, Living Bible** = "It is not as though we were trying to claim credit for the work someone else has done among you." **Phillips** = "Our pride is not in matters beyond our proper sphere nor in the labours of other men."

**Guzik** - Why is Paul stressing the point that he has not, and will not, take authority in another man's sphere? Probably because that is exactly what his opponents among the Corinthian Christians did. They tried to boast in Paul's sphere of accomplishment. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**but with the hope** ([elpis](#)) **that as your faith** ([pistis](#)) **grows** ([auxano](#) - present tense - continually), **we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you** - What is he saying? Hope ([elpis](#)) in almost all the NT uses means not hope so but "hope sure." In this context it somewhat more of a "hope so." As the Corinthians matured his **hope** for them was that they would begin to reach out to other areas and plant other churches and in this way the **sphere** of ministry would be enlarged by their missionary activities. And as their faith grows, there would be less likelihood of infiltration and influence of false teachers.

**As your faith** (present tense - continually) **grows** - A healthy faith is a growing faith. A healthy church is composed of individuals whose faith is growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.." (2Pe 3:18+)

**THOUGHT** - Would you say your faith is actively, progressively growing? If not, why not? The primary tool for growing faith is described by Peter. "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may **grow** ([auxano](#)) in respect to salvation (aka progressive sanctification = present tense salvation." (1Pe 2:2+). Note that in context Peter gives you several clues why your faith may not be growing (1Pe 2:1+), for each of these sins (and any unconfessed sin) will stunt your desire for the Word of Truth. Upshot? No intake. No growth! It is really that simple!

**Broomall** - A church's faith (as your faith groweth—ASV) affects a minister's activity ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**2 Corinthians 10:16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, and not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another.**

Phillips so that before long we shall be preaching the gospel in districts beyond you, instead of being proud of work that has already been done in someone else's province.

AMP So that [we may even] preach the Gospel in lands [lying] beyond you, without making a boast of work already done in another [man's] sphere of activity [before we came on the scene].

NLT Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working. Then there will be no question of our boasting about work done in someone else's territory.

NET so that we may preach the gospel in the regions that lie beyond you, and not boast of work already done in another person's area.

The Living Bible After that, we will be able to preach the Good News to other cities that are far beyond you, where no one else is working; then there will be no question about being in someone else's field.

The Message And we'll all still be within the limits God sets as we proclaim the Message in countries beyond Corinth. But we have no intention of moving in on what others have done and taking credit for it.

CSB so that we may preach the gospel to the regions beyond you without boasting about what has already been done in someone else's area of ministry.

KJV 1900 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

- **preach:** Ro 15:24-28
- **line:** or, rule, 2Co 10:13

#### **Related Passages:**

Acts 19:21 (**REGIONS BEYOND**) Now after these things were finished, Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to

Jerusalem after he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

Romans 15:24, 28 (**REGIONS BEYOND**) Whenever I go to Spain—for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while—....28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain.

## GOSPEL TO REGIONS BEYOND

**so** - So that, after that - He has just mentioned his hope for the Corinthians to expand the work in their sphere. If that happened Paul would be freed up for ministry elsewhere (**regions beyond you**).

**as to preach the gospel** ([euaggelizo/euangelizo](#)) **even to the regions beyond you** - **Regions beyond** (huperekeina) is found only here and means on [the far side](#) (to Paul it was [not a comic strip](#) in time but a serious call in eternity). Paul's desire is to move on into **regions** where no one else has taken the Gospel. Paul wanted to put into practiced what he later "preached" (wrote) in Ro 10:14-17!

**and not to boast** ([kauchaomai](#)) **in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another** - Paul had no desire to boast and take credit for work done in another person's sphere of ministry.

**Gilbrant** - Writings of Ancient Church fathers reveal the apostle did indeed minister the gospel in Spain. He went there probably during the period between his first and second Roman imprisonments.

**2 Corinthians 10:17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.**

Phillips But, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.

The Living Bible As the Scriptures say, "If anyone is going to boast, let him boast about what the Lord has done and not about himself."

The Message "If you want to claim credit, claim it for God."

- Ps 105:3 106:5 Isa 41:16 45:25 65:16 Jer 4:2 9:23,24 Ro 5:11 \*Gr: 1Co 1:29,31 Ga 6:13,14 Php 3:3 \*Gr: Jas 1:9,10

### Related Passages:

Jeremiah 9:23; 24 Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

1 Corinthians 1:31+ so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

Psalms 20:7 Some boast in chariots and some in horses, But we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.

Psalms 34:2 My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

Romans 15:17-18 Therefore in Christ Jesus I have found reason for boasting in things pertaining to God. 18 For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed,

Galatians 6:14 But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

## NO SELF GLORY FOR PAUL

**But HE WHO BOASTS** ([kauchaomai](#)) **IS TO BOAST** ([kauchaomai](#)) **IN THE LORD** ([kurios](#)) - The Corinthians were prone to succumb to the temptation to boast in men. In this verse, Paul leaves absolutely no room for ANY self-glory! Let's imitate Paul (1Co 11:1+). Paul does not disparage boasting, as long as we make sure it is boasting in the Only One Who deserves boasting, the **Lord**. Boast

is a command in [present imperative](#) and the only way we can boast is by continual dependence [on the Holy Spirit](#). Undoubtedly this was like an arrow in the heart of Paul's self-boasting adversaries, for if they were indeed Jewish detractors, they knew this passage from the Old Testament.

**THOUGHT** - When you do a good job for Jesus, aren't you tempted just a little to take just a small percent of the glory? (I am!) Jehovah's words in the OT still ring through clearly in the NT - "I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, Nor My praise to graven images." (Isaiah 42:8) The psalmist echoes Isaiah "Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Your name give glory Because of Your lovingkindness, because of Your truth." (Ps 115:1)

**MacArthur** - After Martin Luther's death, his friends found a scrap of paper in his pocket on which the great Reformer had written, "We are all beggars." Humble men of God realize that they have nothing to boast about. If they preach the gospel, it is because God's Word is a fire in their bones (Jer. 20:9) and they are compelled to preach (1 Cor. 9:16). They serve the church only because Christ puts them into service (1 Tim. 1:12), and any success they have is attributable solely to the grace of God at work in them (1 Cor. 15:10). They cry out with the psalmist, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory" (Ps. 115:1). ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Broomall on in the Lord** - In Paul's epistles, the **in** (en) in the phrase, in the Lord, always expresses an intimate and mystical relation with Christ. The phrase is somewhat like a spiritual trademark (e.g., Ro 16:12, 13, 22; Phil 4:1, 2, 4, 10; Phm 20). No other NT writer uses it. ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

---

## King Of The Apes

He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. —2 Corinthians 10:17

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:1-18

Studies conducted by the National Geographic Society provide some fascinating insights into the behavior of chimpanzees. Observers noted how the leadership of a chimp community changed because of a dramatic bluff used by one of the lowliest members of the colony.

Mike, as he was affectionately known, learned to dominate his chimp establishment with the aid of some empty kerosene cans and a heavy steel box. Hooting loudly, he would bang the metal objects together as he pushed them over the ground. This clamorous behavior frightened the apes so much that the leader surrendered his sovereignty to Mike.

Unfortunately, similar situations may be seen in the church. Those who generate the most activity often receive the greatest attention and honor. But a big program and a flashy personality are not sure evidence of divine blessing.

Paul warned against looking "at things according to the outward appearance" (2 Cor. 10:7). The real measure of our labor is whether it is in keeping with God's Word and reflects His glory rather than our own.

Make sure that whatever you do, you do for the Lord. Then when you glory, it will be in Him! By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Help us not to cloud God's glory,  
Nor with self His light to dim;  
May each thought to Christ be captive,  
Emptied to be filled with Him. —Anon.

You can't glorify self and Christ at the same time.

---

## A Glimpse Of God's Love

He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. —2 Corinthians 10:17

Today's Scripture: John 9:24-34

Nadine was in the last stages of cancer when I met her. The doctor said chemotherapy would no longer help. She was a dedicated Christian and had a wonderful peace from God. She spent her last weeks making scrapbooks for her adult daughters and planning her memorial service.

Nadine's joyful spirit was inviting to be around, and people looked forward to spending time with her. She kept her sense of humor and always shared the ways that the Lord was meeting her needs. She gave everyone around her a glimpse of God's loving

character.

When a man who had been born blind was healed by Jesus, he too had the opportunity to show others a glimpse of who God is (John 9:1-41). Neighbors asked, "How were your eyes opened?" (v.10). He told them about Jesus. When Pharisees questioned him, he told them how Jesus had given him sight, and concluded, "If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (v.33).

We may wonder how we can show others what God is like. God can be clearly seen in the way we handle life's difficulties, such as problems at work or home, or perhaps a serious illness. We can share with others how He is comforting us—and let them know that the Lord cares for them too.

Who in your life needs to see the love of God? By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Believers who are Spirit-filled  
Are unaware that God may be  
Revealing through their Christlike ways  
A glimpse of His reality. —Hess

You can be a glimpse of God's love to someone.

---

### **They Are The Problem**

He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. —2 Corinthians 10:17

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:12-18

Researchers from Virginia Tech University, along with police administrators, recently determined that distracted drivers put others in more danger than aggressive drivers. Drivers who eat, discipline children in the backseat, or talk on the phone are the most hazardous.

When residents in Grand Rapids, Michigan, were asked about the bad habits of drivers that made the highways unsafe, most felt that others caused more problems than they themselves. One woman said that she talked on her cell phone a little, but at least she didn't dial the phone numbers while on the road. She concluded her comments by stating that others "aren't following the rules of the road . . . They put us all at risk."

It's our nature to point a finger at others. The apostle Paul talked about fellow teachers who avoided looking at their own behavior and instead attacked him (2 Cor. 10:12-18). He wrote, "They, measuring themselves by themselves, . . . are not wise" (v.12).

When we don't look at our own actions but instead compare ourselves with others, we often come out looking good. But, as Paul said, it's the Lord's commendation that counts, not our own approval of ourselves (v.18). By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The faults I see in others' lives  
Are often true of me;  
So help me, Lord, to recognize  
My own hypocrisy. —Sper

If you must compare yourself with someone, compare yourself with Christ.

---

### **2 Corinthians 10:18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.**

Phillips It is not self-commendation that matters, it is winning the approval of God.

AMP For [it is] not [the man] who praises and commends himself who is approved and accepted, but [it is the person] whom the Lord accredits and commends.

NLT When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much. The important thing is for the Lord to commend them.

NET For it is not the person who commends himself who is approved, but the person the Lord commends.

The Living Bible When someone boasts about himself and how well he has done, it doesn't count for much.

But when the Lord commends him, that's different!

CJB because it is not the one who recommends himself who is worthy of approval, but the one whom the Lord recommends.

NJB For it is not through self-commendation that recognition is won, but through commendation.

The Message What you say about yourself means nothing in God's work. It's what God says about you that makes the difference.

- **not:** 2Co 10:12 3:1 5:12 Pr 21:2 27:2 Lu 16:15 18:10-14
- **who commends :** 2Co 6:4 2Co 13:7 Ac 2:22 Ro 14:18 16:10 1Co 11:19 2Ti 2:15
- **but:** Mt 25:20-23 Joh 5:42-44 12:43 Ro 2:29 1Co 4:5 1Pe 1:7

#### Related Passage:

2 Corinthians 5:9-10+ (**OUR GOAL IN THIS LIFE**) Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, **to be pleasing to Him**. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 4:3-5+ (**DESIRE FOR DIVINE COMMENDATION**) But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

Matthew 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

## SEEK ONLY GOD'S COMMENDATION

A man is really approved when the Lord thinks well of him, not when he thinks well of himself (2Co 10:18TEV).

**THOUGHT** - Spiritual principle from this passage = seek only to please God and her His commendation!

**For it is not he who commends** ([sunistemi/sunistao](#)) **himself that is approved** ([dokimos](#)), **but he whom the Lord commends** ([sunistemi/sunistao](#)) - Here Paul underscores the most important "seal of approval" in this short lifetime - "A.U.G." Approved unto God. There is no higher approval. There can be no greater goal for every child of God, than to have His "seal of approval" eternally "stamped on our lives!"

**MacArthur** - False teachers are totally focused on the here and now (**ED: FOR THEIR "THEN AND THERE" WILL BE HOT AND LONG!**), as they pursue fame, accolades, notoriety, prestige, wealth, and power. But true servants of Christ look toward their heavenly reward (Matt. 5:12; Luke 6:23; Col. 3:24; Heb. 11:26). They understand that worldly self-commendation is meaningless ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**Broomall** - Paul infinitely preferred Christ's "Well done!" (Mt 25:21, 23) to all the plaudits of self-appointed scholars (cf. 2 Cor 10:12). ([2 Corinthians 10](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - We may commend ourselves or be commended by others, and still not deserve the commendation of God. How does God approve our work? By testing it. The word approved in 2 Corinthians 10:18 means "to approve by testing." There is a future testing at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10ff), but there is also a present testing of the work that we do. God permits difficulties to come to local churches in order that the work might be tested and approved. Over the years, I have seen ministries tested by financial losses, the invasion of false doctrine, the emergence of proud leaders who want to "run the church," and the challenge of change. Some of the churches have fallen apart and almost died, because the work was not spiritual. Other ministries have grown because of the trials and have become purer and stronger; and, through it all, God was glorified. Certainly our ministries must keep records and issue reports, but we must not fall into the "snare of statistics" and think that numbers are the only measurement of ministry. Each situation is unique, and no ministry can honestly be evaluated on the basis of some other ministry. The important thing is that we are where God wants us to be, doing what He wants us to do so that He might be glorified. Motive is as much a part of God's measurement of our work as is growth. If we are seeking to glorify and please God alone, and if we are not afraid of His evaluation of our hearts and lives, then we need not fear the estimates of men or their criticisms. ([Bible Exposition](#))

[Commentary](#))

"But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (2 Cor. 10:17).

---

**Stedman:** So how do we spot the phonies who are all around us?

- They commend themselves, for the most part.
  - They are always boasting of their accomplishment, printing it and spreading it around so you can see
  - They do not let others speak for them, but they talk about it themselves.
  - And they are not concerned about reaching the unreached. They are concerned only with having a little group of their own supporters, building that to the highest number, and paying no attention to the lost around.
  - They manipulate and try to get meetings and try to set up various open doors instead of following those which God opens for them.
  - Most of all, when they boast they make it clear that God is mighty lucky to have them on his side. That is the mark of a counterfeit. He may not be a counterfeit Christian, but he has a counterfeit ministry.
- 

**Commends** (4921) ([sunistemi/sunistao](#) from **sún** = together with + **hístemi** = set, place, stand) means literally to set, place or put together. To set in the same place, this literal meaning being found in Luke 9:32. To bring together. When one brings together a person with another person, it is a way of presenting or introducing them. This gives **sunistemi** the meaning of **commend**, which means to recommend as worthy of confidence (the implication being that others adopt a similar attitude) or to present to one's acquaintance for favorable notice. (9/16 NT uses) Lk. 9:32; Rom. 3:5; Rom. 5:8; Rom. 16:1; 2 Co. 3:1; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 5:12; 2 Co. 6:4; 2 Co. 7:11; 2 Co. 10:12; 2 Co. 10:18; 2 Co. 12:11; Gal. 2:18; Col. 1:17; 2 Pet. 3:5

**Approved** (1384) **dokimos** from **dokime** = test, proof, trial = idea is that when you put metal through a fiery testing and it comes out on the other side enduring it "proven", "authentic" or "genuine" [Click](#) discussion of related word [dokimazo](#) and the antonym = [adokimos](#)) describes one who has stood the test. **Vine** writes that **dokimos** signifies "that which is approved by being proved, that which stands the test Rom. 14:18; Rom. 16:10; 1 Co. 11:19; 2 Co. 10:18; 2 Co. 13:7; 2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:12