

1  **II Corinthians 10**

2  **II Corinthians 10:1-6**

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. 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. For 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, 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, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

3  **II Corinthians 10:7-11**

Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he *is* Christ's, even so we *are* Christ's. For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—lest I seem to terrify you by letters. "For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible." Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will* also *be* in deed when we are present.

4  **II Corinthians 10:12-18**

For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment. But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord." For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

5  **Chapter 10 Outline**

- I. Spiritual Warfare
- II. The Reality of Paul's Authority
- III. The Limits of Paul's Authority

6  **Spiritual Warfare**

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.

- *This opens a section of the letter dealing with Paul as an apostle.*
- “Gentleness” -- *fairness, considerateness, reasonableness*
- “Who in presence . . . but being absent” -- *apparently an accusation of Paul's enemies*

#### 7 **Spiritual Warfare**

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.

- “To be bold” -- *a different word than that translated “bold” in the previous verse; to be bold and act boldly, to dare*
- *What does Paul plan to do?*
  - *Excommunication?*
  - *Physical punishment such as fell on Elymas, Ananias, and Saphira?*
  - *Authoritative proclamation of the Gospel?*

#### 8 **Spiritual Warfare**

3 - For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

- “We walk in the flesh” -- *are human and subject to human conditions*
- “War” -- *στρατευόμεθα -- serve as soldiers, conduct a campaign*
- “According to the flesh” -- *in the power and by the methods of what is merely human*

#### 9 **Spiritual Warfare**

4 - For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

- *“The central problem of our age is not liberalism or modernism, nor the old Roman Catholicism or the new Roman Catholicism, nor the threat of communism, nor even the threat of rationalism and the monolithic consensus which surrounds us. All these are dangerous but not the primary threat. The real problem is this: the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, individually, corporately, tending to do the Lord's work in the power of the flesh rather than of the Spirit. The central problem is always in the midst of the people of God, not in the circumstances surrounding them.” -- Francis Schaeffer*

#### 10 **Spiritual Warfare**

4 - For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

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,

- *These verses are an extended metaphor using the military methods of that day.*
- “Casting down” -- *This is not spoken of the weapons but of the apostles.*
- “Arguments” -- *or reasonings*

#### 11 **Spiritual Warfare**

6 - and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

- “Being ready” -- *Paul and perhaps the other apostles were holding themselves in readiness.*
- “To punish” -- *to do justice, to execute sentence*

12  **The Reality of Paul's Authority**

7 - Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

- *It is foolish to try to judge spiritual things by outward features such as a person's stature or the comeliness of his face.*
- *It would be foolish for anyone in the church at Corinth to try to claim he was somehow more a Christian than Paul was.*
  - *Paul had founded the church at Corinth.*
  - *Paul was an apostle and had seen the risen Lord.*

13  **The Reality of Paul's Authority**

8 - For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—

- *"Boast" -- glory, rejoice*
- *"Somewhat more" -- to excess*
- *"Edification" -- building up*
- *"Shall not be ashamed" -- shall not be brought to shame, shall not be shown up as a vain boaster or pretender*

14  **The Reality of Paul's Authority**

9 - lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

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

11 - Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

- *Paul's opponents within the church at Corinth had apparently been severely criticizing him.*
- *Paul may not have had the conventional gifts of an orator.*

15  **Limits of Paul's Authority**

12 - For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

- *This contains a play on words that is difficult to translate.*
- *Paul begins here to write about the limits of his authority.*
- *Self-commendation is at best a questionable recommendation.*
- *The false teachers seem to have been setting up their own conduct as the standard and then congratulating themselves for living up to it.*
- *The proper comparison and standard for our Christian life is not ourselves or other Christians but rather Christ.*

16  **Limits of Paul's Authority**

13 - We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which

God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you.

14 - For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

- *Paul resisted the temptation to try to govern every church.*
- *He occupied himself with the area of service God had given him.*
- *However, Paul emphasizes clear that the area of service to which God has called him does emphatically include the church at Corinth.*

17  **Limits of Paul's Authority**

15 - not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but having hope, *that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,*

- *It sounds as if Paul's enemies within the church at Corinth had been boasting that the spiritual strength of that church was owing to their teaching.*
- *By contrast, Paul is confident that since he has been teaching the truth, then as the Corinthian believers grow in their faith in the truth, they will have an increasing regard for him.*

18  **Limits of Paul's Authority**

16 - to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

- *Although Paul limits himself to the area of ministry God has given him, he hopes God will enlarge his sphere.*
- *Paul does not intend to take over other men's ministries, but to go boldly where no one before had preached the gospel and build new churches.*

19  **Limits of Paul's Authority**

17 - But "he who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

18 - For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

- *It's not about us.*
- *We should not glory in our own accomplishments, real or imagined, but in the Lord.*
- *We should not commend ourselves but seek God's commendation.*