

## 2 Corinthians 10

**Intro:** Now we come to a notable change of tone in the epistle. Even so, the theme of Paul's future visit runs through the letter. He began by explaining why he was delayed in coming, then spoke about his desire that they complete the promised offering before he arrived, and now he addresses the false teachers in relation to his impending arrival.

### Verses 1-2:

--Paul begins by pleading with this minority element of false teachers and personal slanderers. It is the "**some**" of 2 that is in view in these last few chapters.

--Paul's intention—misunderstood and disdained by the "some"—was to first plead with them in imitation of the ministry of Christ.

**\*Isaiah 42:2-3: He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.\***

**\*Matthew 11:29: Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.\***

--This prideful group couldn't imagine having authority, power, and influence and not wielding it but holding it in moderation. In other words, they never understood meekness—power under control. \*Moses was a cold-blooded murderer but also the meekest man on earth!\*

--In fact, Paul was accused of not being bold (so crazy!). This minority opposition literally accused him of ministering in the flesh—**who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.**

### Verses 3-6:

--**(3)** Paul admits that he lives in a fleshly body but his ministry was not based on material goods, physical skills, or ungodly philosophies. He knew the real **war** was on another level—the supernatural.

--Do we forget that we are in a war? A war with intelligent beings that hate us and strategize the worst for our lives? Do you forget that Satan has a plan for your life? How do you think Satan is working in your life today to steal, kill, and destroy?

--**(4)** Now, Paul makes it very clear where the battleground of this war is—in the mind and according to the truth of God.

--He also knows that the weapons we use to fight the war of truth and lies have nothing to do with **carnal** or fleshly power.

--These weapons are mighty—not us. Through God's power—not ours. Mighty *by, for, or to* God.

--Paul knew the power of these strongholds (arguments that are against God) personally!

**\*Acts 26:9: Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.\***

--The great war happening in our world is the conflict of all worldly thought, feeling, and ideology that keeps people from the knowledge of God!

--Any ideas about life that are contrary to the truth as revealed by God are enemy strongholds—high places—and need to be cast down like an idol in OT times! \*Evolution; A women’s “right” to abortion; All unbiblical sexual morals; That God doesn’t care about your sin—or God won’t help you in your sin; Living godly is unfulfilling and joyless; Feminism is liberty; The Bible is outdated and doesn’t relate to our modern day; etc.

--As we see in the various lists of spiritual armor mentioned in Scripture—the armor is not meant to protect the body but the truth of God in the mind and heart. The weapons we have—the mighty weapons empowered by God—are the Word and prayer.

--This is why the Bible and the Word of God are always the center of the battle. People will slander the Word of God (The Bible is outdated; full of mistakes; Patriarchal and Bigoted; Untrustworthy; Needs new context; etc.) or totally ignore the Word (Never even read it; Escape listening to it; Totally relativize it).

--We will come to know the power of God to cast down strongholds when we believe the Word of God and trust in it as the infallible thoughts of God Vs. the fallible thoughts of fallen men.

*\*Hodge (2 Corinthians): “A rationalistic Christian, a philosophizing theologian, therefore lays aside the divine for the human, God’s wisdom for human wisdom, the infinite and infallible for the finite and fallible. The success of the Gospel depends on its being presented not as our word but as God’s Word; not as something to be proved, but as something to be believed. It was on this principle that Paul acted, and hence he was not at all intimidated by the number, the authority, the ability, or the learning of his opponents. He was confident that he could cast down all the proud pretensions because he relied not on himself but on God whose messenger he was.”\**

--(5) Again, Satan knows he must engender thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God on every level. He knows that our thoughts determine our behavior!

**\*Psalm 10:4: The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.\***

**\*Proverbs 23:7: For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.\***

**\*Micah 2:1: Woe to those who devise iniquity, and work out evil on their beds! At morning light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.\***

--We protect bodies but do we equip and protect minds? All the enemy needs to do is get your thoughts and your life is his! \*Porn; Rage; Tongue; Doubt; Youth and Social Media!\*

*\*Tozer (The Price of Neglect): “What we think about when we are free to think about what we will—that is what we are or will soon become. . . Our voluntary thoughts not only reveal what we are, they predict what we will become. Except for that conduct which springs from our basic natural instincts, all conscious behavior is preceded by and arises out of our thoughts. The will can become a servant of the thoughts, and to a large degree even our emotions follow our thinking. ‘The more I think about it the madder I get’ is the way the average man states it, and in so doing not only reports accurately on his own mental processes but pays as well an unconscious tribute to the power of thought. Thinking stirs feelings and feeling triggers action. That is the way we are made and we may as well accept it. . .*

*“Thinking about God and holy things creates a moral climate favorable to the growth of faith and love and humility and reverence. We cannot by thinking regenerate our hearts, nor take our sins away nor change the leopard’s spots. Neither can we by thinking add one cubit to our stature or make evil good or darkness light. So to teach is to misrepresent a scriptural truth and to use it to our own undoing. But we can by Spirit-inspired thinking help to make our minds pure sanctuaries in which God will be pleased to dwell.*

*“I referred in a previous paragraph to ‘our voluntary thoughts’ and I used the words advisedly. In our journey through this evil and hostile world many thoughts will be forced upon us which we do not like and for which we have no moral sympathy. The necessity to make a living may compel us for days on end to entertain thoughts in no sense elevating. Ordinary awareness of the doings of our fellow men will bring thoughts repugnant to our Christian souls. These need affect us but little. For them we are not responsible and they may pass through our minds like a bird through the air, without leaving a trace. They have no lasting effect upon us because they are not our own. They are unwelcome intruders for which we have no love and which we get rid of as quickly as possible.”\**

--This is why Paul says that we must be **bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.**

--Sometimes (especially for children and new believers) good thoughts as the knowledge of God must be sown and implanted and watered. \*The love of God, heaven, hell, forgiveness, prayer, faith, mercy, the cross, the Gospel, etc.\*

--At other times a battle ensues to hold godly thoughts over evil ones. We must be ready to fight that battle day in and day out!

\*Watson (A Divine Cordial): *“It is Satan that makes us have good thoughts of ourselves, and hard thoughts of God.”*

--We will all face evil thoughts. What do we do? Do we oppose them? Hate them? Resist them and their influence? Would you wish that they were gone and never returned? Then do not own them. They are not yours.

--Here are a few practical helps in taking thoughts captive to Christ:

- 1) Think: *What does the Word of God tell me about this?* \*Memorize Scripture\*
- 2) Pray! \*If you have a lustful thought pray for others who may be facing the same struggle!\*
- 3) Join the fellowship of other godly men and women. \*Isolated sheep are easy prey\*
- 4) Be about God’s business!

**\*Proverbs 16:3: Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established.\***

- 5) Begin and end the day thinking of Him—but don’t go far in the middle either!

--Return to the Lord as soon as you discover your thoughts are wandering. He has not wandered from you. The battle to keep our thoughts on Christ, or at least in His presence, will become easier when we don’t stray far the rest of the day.

--(6) Paul states clearly that he is ready to punish unrepentant thoughts and actions when he arrives. Was this church discipline or something more supernatural? Or both? \*I think Paul simply walked in the Spirit and knew the Spirit would do something—whatever that might look like. (See: **Acts 13:9-11; 1 Cor. 5; 1 Tim. 1:20**) \*

### Verses 7-11:

--(7) This minority element was only looking at things according to the outward appearance—as is so easy to do in this type of spiritual warfare. We get caught up in secondary causes where Jesus always knew the truth. \*Temptation of Christ & Peter’s “Get behind Me Satan.”\*

--They were also apparently claiming some type of special favor with God that Paul was excluded from, but Paul knew he was also Christ’s. He had equal access to God. \*Always beware of those claiming some type of special favor with God over that of others! God is no respecter of persons.\*

--(8) This is a very interesting verse in light of spiritual authority. Paul tells us three things:

1) Spiritual authority is a real thing. \*Abuses don’t disprove the reality!\*

2) It is only given by God. No true spiritual authority ever came from the congregation; the pope; the church; a seminary; or a man. Only from the Lord.

3) True spiritual authority is given for edification and not destruction. To build up the church.

\*Pruning or discipline is a necessary part spiritual growth and health.\*

--(9-11) There are traditions and ideas that Paul was small, sort of ugly, with an annoying voice, etc. but we don’t know. We do know that he was no weakling or invalid based on how he traveled and what he suffered!

--Again, his accusers misunderstood his imitation of Christ’s meekness and gentleness for weakness because they had no comprehension of authority under control.

--Paul was going to be the same in person as he was in letter. He was not afraid to edify the church by dealing with those that were an unrepentant and unhealthy element. \*I doubt he would fear the likes of them if he didn’t fear confronting Peter’s hypocrisy in **Galatians 2:11**.\*

### Verse 12:

--These false teachers were apparently meeting their own random standards that others didn’t measure up to—including the apostle Paul—and happily commended themselves for it!

--Think of the views of the 7 churches in Revelation of themselves Vs. Other churches Vs.

Christ’s view of them. \*There has never been a day and age when so much comparing ourselves among ourselves has ever happened and it is bringing about a literal national mental health crisis—constantly remeasuring who we are and the life we live!\*

--We are not wise!

### Verses 13-16:

--This is another interesting insight into how Paul viewed ministry by the Holy Spirit. There is such balance here. True humility doesn’t deny what God has done in His grace but it also does not cross the boundaries of reality.

--Paul would never boast about anything beyond ***the limits of the sphere God appointed us*** as if God had done so through him. Paul made it a point to do what God called him to do and to stay out of what God called other people to do. \*Stay in your lane!\*

**\*Romans 15:20: *And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation.\****

--And for Paul, being involved in the church in Corinth was his lane! ***Are you not my work in the Lord? (1 Cor. 9:1)***

--What is the God-appointed field for your life? Are you faithful in the field whose limits God has set for you? If you are not sure what that is, read the Word of God and He will tell you!

--It is easiest to look to your home circle! Verses like this are all over the Bible:

**\*1 Timothy 5:4: *But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.\****

--(14-16) These false teachers had lots of ideas for the church that Paul started in God's appointed field for him—not them. We don't want to find ourselves as fake bosses with no real authority in another man's field. \*Some will when the Lord returns!\*

--Now, Paul definitely shared the work of the ministry in Corinth with other men. He gladly let others help like Apollos, Titus, Timothy, etc. so why so hard here? Because this group was not there for the edification of the church or the glory of God. The "some" were there for themselves.

#### **Verses 17-18:**

--But what if people argue about whose field is whose? Well, it will all be clear one day soon!

--God will be the ground of all praise and confidence. In the end, all ministry is simply about pleasing God, and the ultimate reward is His commendation.

--Ministry should never become our identity. What if it was all taken from us today? Could we put it down as gladly as we picked it up? If not, then it was an idol!

--Is our service to God really about God's glory and God's pleasure or has it become about our own?