

# **2 Corinthians 10 - "Secrets" of the Ministry; How to Wage Spiritual Warfare; How to Measure Spiritual Maturity**

## **III. Paul's vindication of his apostleship (2 Cor 10:1–13:14)**

- (1) Paul answers false charges (10:1-18)
  - (A) Paul answers the charge of cowardice (10:1-6)
  - (B) Paul answers the charge of weakness (10:7-11)
  - (C) Paul answers the charge of intrusion (10:12-18)

## **2 Corinthians 10**

### **III. Paul's vindication of his apostleship (2 Cor 10:1–13:14)**

- (1) Paul answers false charges (10:1-18)

**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!

**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!

**1** Now I myself, Paul, plead with you with the gentleness and kindness of the Messiah—I who am humble when I am face to face with you but forceful toward you when I am away!

**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:

- The rebels—the Judaizers—said Paul was courageous when writing letters from a distance, but was timid and weak when present (Cf. v9-11).

- Christians usually grow after the manner in which they are born. If in an atmosphere of dictatorial leadership, they grow up depending upon man's wisdom and strength. If in an atmosphere of humility and love, they learn to depend upon the Lord.

- Paul's purpose was to exalt Christ and not himself (1 Cor 2:1-5), so he played down his own authority and ability. They failed to perceive that true spiritual power is in "meekness and gentleness." ["Paul" means "little."]

- Jesus also exhibited meekness and gentleness (Matt 11:29)

[Jesus could also be stern and angry when occasion demanded (Matt 15:1-2; 23:13-33; Mark 11:15-17; John 2:13-16).]

- Usually the only way to bring positive change in a strained relationship is by submission...mutual submission to God.

- Marriage: an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person. "Submission is learning to duck so God can hit your husband!" Our prayer is often a substitute for submission rather than a petition to enable it.

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

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.

2 I beg you that when I come I will not need to be courageous by daring to oppose some people who think that we are living according to the flesh.

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.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh,

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

3 Of course, we are living in the world, but we do not wage war in a world-like way.

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

- Many do not realize that the church is continually engaged in warfare. Those who do understand the seriousness of the Christian battle do not always know how to fight the battle. Human methods are doomed to failure. You cannot fight spiritual battles with weapons of the flesh (Eph 6:10ff).

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

4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not those of the world. Instead, they have the power of God to demolish fortresses. We tear down arguments

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

- "...warfare" *strateia*, "campaign"; not just a skirmish. The powers of darkness are still trying to destroy the work of God (Matt 16:18).

- "...fortresses" - walls of resistance: reasonings opposed to the truth of God's Word; pride of intellectualism, exalting itself in arrogance (Rom 12:16; 1 Cor 1:18ff, et al.)

Humility is one of the strongest spiritual weapons; pride plays right into the hands of Satan. Humility is not self-denigration, lack of confidence, or inability to accept affirmation.

Humility is a realistic view of oneself from God's perspective. Its manifestation is meekness: a resourceful inner strength that enables one to respond with gentleness and steadfastness in the midst of opposition, criticism, or rejection. It grows out of being able to see oneself as God sees us.

- 5 We are destroying arguments and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,
- 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,
- 5 and every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive in order to obey the Messiah.
- 5 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;
  
- 6 and we are ready to **punish** all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.
- 6 and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.
- 6 Once your obedience is complete, we will be ready to reprimand every type of disobedience.
- 6 And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.
  - "...punish" - *ekdikeo*, two meanings:
    - (1) to vindicate one's right, do one justice; to protect, defend, one person from another
    - (2) to avenge a thing; to punish a person for a thing.

(B) Paul answers the charge of weakness (10:7-11)

- 7 You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, have him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so too are we.
- 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.
- 7 Look at the plain facts! If anyone is confident that he belongs to the Messiah, he should remind himself of this: Just as he belongs to the Messiah, so do we.
- 7 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.
  
- 8 For if I boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame,

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,  
8 So if I boast a little too much about our authority, which the Lord gave us to build you up and not to tear you down, I will not be ashamed of it.  
8 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:

9 for I do not want to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.  
9 for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.  
9 I do not want you to think that I am trying to frighten you with my letters.  
9 That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters.

10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."  
10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."  
10 For someone is saying, "His letters are impressive and forceful, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible."  
10 For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.

11 Have such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons we are also in deed when present.  
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.  
11 Someone like this should take note of the following: What we say by letter when we are absent is what we will do when present!  
11 Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.  
- In other words, "Better get ready because if it is necessary I will show you how powerful I can be...." It is always a "no win" situation: if he was a true apostle he would show it by using his authority. If he "threw his weight around" they would have found fault with that. "Wisdom is justified of her children" (Matt 11:19).  
- Their criticism backfires: if Paul was not an apostle, he was a counterfeit. If so, the church he founded at Corinth was not a true church. If he was a deceiver, then the Corinthians were the deceived!

(C) Paul answers the charge of intrusion (10:12-18)

**12** For we do not presume to rank or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they have no understanding.

**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.

**12** We would not dare put ourselves in the same class with, or compare ourselves to, those who recommend themselves. Whenever they measure themselves by their own standards or compare themselves among themselves, they show how foolish they are.

**12** For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

**13** But we will not boast beyond *our* measure, but within the measure of the domain which God assigned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you.

**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.

**13** We will not boast about what cannot be evaluated. Instead, we will stay within the field that God assigned us, so as to reach even you.

**13** But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

**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;

**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;

**14** For it is not as though we were overstepping our limits when we came to you. We were the first to reach you with the gospel of the Messiah.

**14** For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ:

**15** not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other people's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our domain, enlarged even more by you,

**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,

**15** We are not boasting about work done by others that cannot be evaluated. On the contrary, we cherish the hope that your faith may continue to grow and enlarge our sphere of action among you until it overflows.

15 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,

16 so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, *and* not to boast in what has been accomplished in the domain of another.

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.

16 Then we can preach the gospel in the regions far beyond you without boasting about things already accomplished by someone else.

16 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.

17 But THE ONE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.

17 But he who boasts is to boast in the Lord.

17 "The person who boasts should boast in the Lord."

**17** But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

- Quoting Jer 9:24 (Cf. 1 Cor 1:31)

18 For *it is* not the one who commends himself that is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

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

18 It is not the person who commends himself who is approved, but the person whom the Lord commends.

18 For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.