

2 CORINTHIANS 10 | Authority

Take Captive Every Thought

1 I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness (πραΰτης) and gentleness (ἐπιείκεια) of Messiah—I who am humble (ταπεινός) when face to face with you, but bold (θαρρέω) toward you when I am away!— 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 (κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας). 3 For though we walk in the flesh (Ἐν σαρκί... περιπατοῦντες), we are not waging war (στρατεύω, pres.) according to the flesh (οὐ κατὰ σάρκα). 4 For the weapons (ὄπλον) of our warfare (στρατεία) are not of the flesh (σαρκικός) but have divine power to destroy (καθαίρεσις) strongholds (ὄχυρωμα). 5 We destroy (καθαίρω) arguments (λογισμός, pl.) and every lofty opinion (ὑψωμα) raised (ἐπαίρω, pres. mid.) against the knowledge of God (τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ), and take captive (αἰχμαλωτίζω, pres.) every thought (πᾶν νόημα) into the obedience of Messiah (εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ), 6 being ready to punish (ἐκδικέω, aor.) every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

Don't Be Ashamed of Your Authority

7 Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he is Messiah's, let him remind himself that just as he is Messiah's, so also are we. 8 For even if I boast a little too much of our authority (ἐξουσία), which the Lord [Jesus] gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. 9 I do not want to appear to be frightening you with my letters (ἐπιστολή). 10 For they say,

His letters (αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ) are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech (λόγος) of no account.

11 Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we do when present. 12 Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding (συνίημι, pres.).

Boast in the Lord Only in Your Area of Influence

13 But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. For we were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Messiah. 15 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, 16 so that we may preach the gospel in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area of influence. 17 Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord [Jesus]. 18 For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

Overview

1. Quotes.

- a. “The progress of thought in this epistle is like the movement of a mighty army advancing over rugged terrain still inhabited by pockets of stubborn resistance.”¹
- b. “It is my contention ... that chs. 1—9 were written in stages over a considerable period and that after Paul had written these chapters, he received distressing news of further problems at Corinth that prompted him to write chs. 10—13 and then send all thirteen chapters as a single letter.”²

2. The conflict of 2 Co 10-13 is different than the one in 1 Co 5 and 2 Co 2.

3. The super-apostles:

- a. See their mission in life as undermining Paul.
- b. Think they are right and Paul is wrong.
- c. Feel Paul is a false teacher.
- d. Always follow where Paul has been.
- e. Demand Gentiles follow Jewish customs and laws.

4. Paul’s method:

- a. Is not:
 - (1) Character assassination.
 - (2) Red herrings.
 - (3) Misstating what the other party is really saying.
 - (4) Building up a clique.
 - (5) Spinning the narrative.
 - (6) My way or the highway.
- b. Is:
 - (1) Walking by the Spirit. The ends do not justify the means.
 - (2) Following sound biblical hermeneutics.
 - (3) Logic, prayer, love, patience, and a willingness to learn.
 - (4) Winning people, not arguments.

Lesson for Life

1. When resolving church conflict, we are to entreat (παρακαλέω) by the meekness and gentleness of Jesus (v. 1).

- a. παρακαλέω: “to urge strongly, appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage” (BDAG, 765).
- b. This is often very difficult to do. See *Conflict Resolution* and *Humility*.
- c. **1 Pe 5:5** 5 And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble.

¹ Broomall, 1261.

² Harris, 661.

2. **Sometimes church leaders have to show boldness with confidence (v. 2).**
 - a. Punishing disobedience is sometimes necessary (v. 6). See *Church Discipline*.
 - b. **1 Co 5:4-5** 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.
 - c. **1 Co 5:12** 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

3. **We should be very careful about accusing church leaders of walking according to the flesh (v. 2).**
 - a. **1 Th 5:12-13** 12 We ask you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.
 - b. **1 Ti 5:19** 19 Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

4. **We are to wage war by destroying arguments and lofty opinions raised against the knowledge of God (vv. 3-5).**
 - a. All these verbs are present tense.
 - b. See *Biblical Worldview*.
 - c. **Ro 12:2** 2 Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the desire of God, what is good, acceptable, and perfect.
 - d. “Carnal weapons like intimidation, manipulation, trickery, double-talk, rumor, and hypocritical behavior are ineffective in spiritual warfare.”³

5. **We are to keep taking captive every thought into the obedience of Messiah (v. 5).**
 - a. We are what we think. We must learn, by the Spirit, to discipline our thought life and bring all our thoughts into submission to what God has revealed in Scripture. See *Thoughts*.
 - b. **Php 4:8** 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.
 - c. **Col 2:6-8** 6 Therefore, as you received Messiah Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Messiah.

6. **Jesus gives authority to certain believers for building up (v. 8).**
 - a. **2 Co 13:10** 10 For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.
 - b. **Ro 14:19** 19 So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

³ Constable, 142.

- c. **Ro 15:2** 2 Let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to build him up.
 - d. **1 Co 14:3** 3 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding, encouragement, and consolation.
 - e. **1 Co 14:26** 26 What then, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.
 - f. **Eph 4:29** 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.
- 7. We are not to be ashamed (αἰσχύνω) of the authority Jesus gives us (v. 8).**
- a. **Php 1:20** 20 ...As it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Messiah will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death.
 - b. **1 Jn 2:28** 28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.
 - c. **1 Pe 5:1-5** 1 I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder, witness of the sufferings of Messiah, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd (ποιμαίνω, aor.) the flock of God among you, exercising oversight (ἐπισκοπέω) not under compulsion, but voluntarily according to God, and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness, 3 nor domineering over (κατακυριεύω) those in your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd (τοῦ ἀρχιποιμένου) appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
- 8. We are not to commend ourselves by classifying, comparing, or measuring ourselves by other believers or church leaders (v. 12).**
- a. We are not to commend ourself but seek Jesus' commendation (v. 18).
 - b. **Ro 14:4** 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.
 - c. **Ro 14:10-12** 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.
- 9. It is legitimate for us to boast with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us (v. 13).**
- a. The word "boast" occurs 29 times in this letter.
 - b. My area of influence is my family, my eldership at Cavy, and my directorship of FFNZ. How am I doing in my area of influence?
 - c. Our hope is to be that our area of influence may be enlarged (v. 15).
 - d. We are not to boast in of work already done in another's area of influence (v. 16).
 - e. Paul is always looking for new areas to go to. He doesn't tread upon others' area of influence (Ro 15:18-21).
- 10. If we boast at all, we are to boast in Jesus (v. 17).**

- a. **Je 9:23-24** 23 Thus says Yahweh: Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am Yahweh who practices loyal love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares Yahweh.
- b. **1 Co 1:31** 31 ...So that, as it is written, Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.
- c. **Ga 6:14** 14 But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Messiah, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
- d. **1 Th 2:19** 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?