

**BELIEVERS SHOULD
FOLLOW CHRISTLIKE
LEADERS AND BOAST
ONLY IN THE LORD**

2 CORINTHIANS 10

INTRODUCTION

- In this chapter, Paul defends his ministry again, likely because there is a new crisis in the Corinthian church.
- He explores the balance between meek humility and bold authority, and he also reveals the reason behind the exercising of his authority.
- Paul also unpacks the dangers of comparison as a means to boast in oneself, and instead offers a better way: boasting in the Lord.

**HOLD TIGHTLY TO YOUR
IDENTITY IN CHRIST AS
YOU BATTLE IN
SPIRITUAL WARFARE**

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6

BOLDNESS

- Chapters 10–13 in 2 Corinthians have a marked change in tone.
- Paul wanted to embody Christ in his last visit to Corinth, wanted to be meek and gentle, and based his argument in the character of Jesus himself.
- But this Christlike attitude received criticism from Paul's opponents.

BOLDNESS

- Knowing these accusations, Paul does not want the Corinthians to equate Christ's (or his) humility with timidity or lack of authority.
- While it was his preference to come to Corinth in love and gentleness, he was not afraid to use harsh measures (verse 2 and 1 Corinthians 4:21).

WEAPONS

- In verse 3, Paul defends why he has acted in humility while he was with them. Despite his presence in the world, he does not “wage war” according to the values and standards of the world.
- The weapons of the world include impressive presence, eloquent speaking, self-commendation, religious pedigree, the experiences of visions, performance of signs, and an authoritarian demeanor.

WEAPONS

- While Paul wants to tear down arguments (vs. 4–5), he desires to build up people. Paul's heart and goal in this warfare is to make people obedient.
- Paul does not discourage the testing of credentials. Surely the Corinthians should test any person claiming to be an apostle. However, Paul casts doubt on the criteria the Corinthians were using. Their criteria was ironically worldly, all the while claiming that Paul was the one walking in the flesh.

WEAPONS

- Paul is ready to practice discipline against the unrepentant dissenters, but only once the Corinthians' obedience and reconciliation with Paul is truly complete (verse 6).
- To risk a face-to-face confrontation with these opponents without the true support of the Corinthian church would likely result in ineffective discipline.

WEAPONS

- The church will have to stand behind the discipline Paul exercised on these dissenters and maintain it in the future.
- This shows us the importance of both church discipline and Christlike leadership, as we've seen in other parts of Paul's Corinthian correspondence.
- If a church is not unified and resolute in its discipline of those who divide and manipulate the congregation, great havoc can be wrought.

**BELIEVERS SHOULD NOT
BOAST BASED ON
COMPARISON TO
OTHERS, BUT IN THE
LORD**

2 CORINTHIANS 10:7-18

BOASTING

- In a culture that boasted in elegant rhetoric, flashy resumes, and letters of commendation, Paul was eccentric and dismissed.
- He displayed none of these values that the Corinthians cherished.
- To answer them, Paul offers a defense of his authority and urges them to embrace a ministry that boasts only in the Lord.

BOASTING

- The Corinthians had an elitist mentality, one that said “only we are of Christ.” Paul answers this by saying that he and his team are of Christ, too.
- In verse 8, Paul explains God’s purpose behind giving him apostolic authority.
- He did not want it to seem like he was scaring them into submission through “weighty and forceful letters,” but instead, building them up in love.

BOASTING

- If the Corinthians would think for just a moment about his place in their history, they would realize that it was he, through God's strength, who brought them the Good News of Christ, established their church, and built them up in faith.
- While they may assume that his letters are just scare tactics, thinking that he will be "soft on them" when he finally comes, his actions will be resolved, firm and authoritative as his letter was.

LIMITS

- In a moment of satirical irony, Paul puts on an artificial timidity: saying he would not dare to place himself on the level of people who sing their own praises and elevate themselves above each other by means of worldly competition.
- His real opinion of them emerges beyond the façade at the end of the verse: “they are without understanding.”

LIMITS

- Here Paul is setting up a contrast between proper boasting and improper boasting of false apostles.
- Acceptable boasting has a specific sphere and boundary line, which Paul reveals in verse 13.
- The proper sphere for boasting is a divinely given area of service or influence. Unlike his adversaries, Paul refused to take credit for the work being done outside the limits of his own ministry.

LIMITS

- Paul finishes by revealing his ultimate hope for this situation: that the Corinthian church would not only be stabilized, but grow in power and influence so that the Gospel could go forward to further lands.
- If the Corinthian church would heal and grab hold of this vision, the nations could be reached.
- This is unlike Paul's opposition, who boasted in the work of others.

LIMITS

- To conclude, Paul finishes with a fitting principle about boasting in verse 17: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
- To Paul, there is a type of human boasting that is acceptable, however, self-congratulation and vain credit-taking is missing the point.
- God is the source of all gifting and ministry success, and He alone deserves our boasting.

Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual Battle

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness of this world, against spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For 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.

Three Ws

- Our Walk
- Our Weapons
- Our Warfare



1. Our Walk

- “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh”
(2 Corinthians 10:3).
- Even though we walk in the flesh, our warfare is not fleshly.
- This war has been going on long before we came on the scene.

1. Our Walk

- For the battle to be successful, those who are threatened must be willing to stand up and fight.
- Satan has been successful in the world because either (1) Christians have been unwilling to fight, or (2) Christians have not been aware that there is a spiritual battle.

2. Our Weapons

- Paul also teaches: “for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses” (2 Corinthians 10:4).
- One of the most important weapons is the Word of God.
- Paul calls it the “Sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17).

2. Our Weapons

- We are to gird our loins with truth - we need to define the truth, defend the truth, and spread the truth.
- We are to wear the breastplate of righteousness - live holy lives.
- We are also to take up the shield of faith - we are to have bold faith.

2. Our Weapons

- What does the Bible say about faith?
- Faith is defined as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).
- Spiritual warfare is an invisible war. Faith is the recognition of this invisible world and God’s control.

2. Our Weapons

- Another important weapon is prayer.
- We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to pray continually (some translations say to pray without ceasing).
- Paul says that “with all prayer and petition” we are to “pray at all times in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18).

3. Our Warfare

- “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” (2 Cor. 10:5).
- We cannot fight this war with physical weapons because our targets are not physical.

3. Our Warfare

- The word “speculations” (sometimes translated “imagination”) refers to the mind. It includes our thoughts and our reflections.
- We should challenge the false ideas in the world by countering unbiblical speculations and proclaiming God’s truth.

3. Our Warfare

- We must fight this spiritual battle with our heart, soul, spirit, and mind.
- They are spiritual targets that must be fought with spiritual weapons.
- Our ultimate goal is to pull down the strongholds of Satan in this world.



Satan's Character and Attributes

Three Titles

- **Ruler of the World** - John 12:31, 16:11, also 14:30.
- It means that Satan can use the elements of society, culture, and government to achieve his evil ends in the world.
- Doesn't mean every aspect of society or culture is evil and doesn't mean he has complete control.

Three Titles

- **God of this World** - 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Paul says has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel.
- Satan sets himself up as a false god to many. His power over religion and the ability to promote false religions keeps people from the true gospel.

Three Titles

- **Prince of the Air** - Ephesians 2:2
- Satan controls the thoughts of those in the world's system.
- The Bible says "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).
- That is why we find ourselves in the midst of spiritual warfare.

Demons in the Bible



Old Testament

- Fewer references to demons in the Old Testament, but they are certainly active.
- Deuteronomy 32:17 - "sacrificed to demons"
- Psalm 106:37 - "sacrificed their sons and daughters to the demons."



Gospels

- Demon-possessed man (Matthew 12).
- Man in synagogue (Mark 1, Luke 4).
- Cast out demons from two men into swine (Matthew 8).
- Healed demon-possessed daughter of woman (Matthew 15).



Gospels

- Cast out demon that disciples could not cast out (Matthew 17).
- Cast out seven demons from Mary Magdalene (Luke 8).
- Healed woman who had sickness for 18 years caused by spirit (Luke 13).



Acts

- Apostles healed people who were “sick or afflicted with unclean spirits” (5:16).
- Paul commanded a spirit to come out of a slave girl who was a fortune-teller.
- The owners saw their hope of profit gone (Acts 16-18-19).



Spiritual Warfare

