

# “What Christianity Is Not

## 2 Corinthians Chapter 10

Chapters 10-13 Paul is defending his apostleship. Not because he is insecure but that the attack on his calling undermines the message, the Gospel which leads to salvation for men.

2 Corinthians 11:3 *“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”*

### 2Cr 10:1 1) Confidence Not According to the Flesh vs 1-6

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!

### 2Cr 10:2 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.

- The Corinthians made a habit of comparing people especially their ministers. 1 Corinthians we saw some were of Apollos, some of Peter and some of Paul. They classified, categorized and criticized these ministers to evaluate who was worthy of their attention.
- Some criticized Paul saying that he wrote good powerful letters but when face to face he wasn't very impressive.
- Paul doesn't desire to be as powerful or bold as maybe Apollos was or anybody else was. He desires to be who he is.
- There is a warning here for us to be careful in evaluating ministers. Just because they are not the flavor we prefer strength or skill wise it does not mean their calling or their message is not from God.

### 2Cr 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh,

1<sup>st</sup> Battlefield

- We all have a body and we function with it. We breath, we eat, we move, we work. But our war, our battles are in not in the realm of our natural body. So we do not make war with it.
- The first and very important point to know is that we **ARE** in a battlefield and we **ARE** engaged in warfare. Some would like to think that once we become a Christian we can walk with an eternal smile and experience no struggle ever again.
- The truth is we battle:
  - **From With Out** - the majority of people around us do not live for Christ. Their standard of living and in some, their contempt for Christ can be a source of struggle for us. Again our battle isn't the people themselves but the moral standard and anti Christ philosophy that attempts to seduce us from Jesus.  
**Example:** After the Lord answers our prayer, we tell people what Happened. Many times the unbeliever will not consider the Lord answered prayer, that it was just coincidence or even that we are silly and simple to think that it was divine intervention. That is a battle zone.
  - **From With In** - after the big obvious sins are purged from our life God goes to work on those subtle but even more grotesque sins. The attitudes of the heart. Pride, Control, Selfishness, Fear, Anger, Prejudice, Self Righteousness, it seem we enter a lifelong battle to shape us from the inside out.

### 2Cr 10:4 for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2<sup>nd</sup> Weapons

- When we see the word “weapons” we think of guns, knives, spears, things of this type. But we have seen that the battlefield is different. So the “weapons” are different. In this battle for truth, carnal weapons though destructive are powerless in this battle. Different weapons are needed when battling against speculation, imagination and argument raised against the knowledge of God.
- Ephesians 6 lists our Armor / Weapons:

Ephesians 6:10-13 *“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm”*

Ephesians 6:14-18 *“Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is*

the **word of God**. With all **prayer** and petition pray at all times..."

**Divinely Powerful Weapons (Armor)**

God's Armor / Weapons  
Belt of Truth  
Breastplate of Righteousness  
Shoes of the Gospel  
Shield of Faith  
Helmet of Salvation  
Sword of the Spirit / Word of God  
Prayer

**Carnal Weapons**

Man's own Strength or Ability  
Manipulation, Flattery, Exaggeration  
Image of Success  
Smooth Cleaver Words  
Power and Influence  
Demanding Authority  
Human schemes and plans  
Self Reliance

2Cr 10:5  
3<sup>rd</sup> Objective

*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,*

2Cr 10:6

*and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.*

- Every engagement has objectives. Every soldier is trained in combat to use their weapons to meet the enemy and be victorious in accomplishing the objectives in every battle. In our Spiritual Warfare we have objectives.
- #1 - Destroying Speculations (NKJV = Pulling Down Strongholds)
  - These are deep seated thoughts and perceptions that direct behavior.
  - We engage those that are conceived by man's imagination and not the Word of God
  - Some of these are deeply entrenched. But the Word of God says they can be pulled down. An example is the reformation pulling down the papal system of obedience to the pope and raising up obedience to Christ.
- #2 - Destroying every lofty thing raised up against the Knowledge of God (NKJV = Casting Down Arguments)
  - This lofty thing are thoughts of having a better way, a more sophisticated or a more relevant method than that of God
  - You can see that these things are not only in the heart and mind of the non-Christian. But is found in the heart of churches today. An example is the seeker friendly concept of minimizing the mention of Jesus or the Sacrifice He made in His bloody death on a cross. Or to drop the message of sin or hell from the gospel.
- #3 - Taking every thought captive
  - Just about every Christian author has written a book titled "*Battle for the Mind*" I have seen book after book with this title or something very similar. The reason is that this really is one of our biggest battles.
  - Isaiah 65:2 "*I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in the way which is not good, \*following their own thoughts\**"
  - Isaiah 55:8 "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD*"
  - But in Romans 12:2 "*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, so that you may **\*prove what the will of God is, that which is good and \*acceptable and perfect.\****"
  - We are not helpless victims of our thought life. WE ARE TO TAKE EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.
  - Why because 1 Corinthians 6 19-20 says we are not our own but that we are God's possession bought with a price.
- #4 - Punish disobedience
  - Paul speaking to the church is ready to apply church discipline to the Corinthians. He has called for this at least once before. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)
  - He went on to instruct in 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 "*I wrote to you not to associate with any **so-called brother** if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. **REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.***"
  - Yet Paul is not quick to excommunicate. He allows ample opportunity for people to walk in obedience. He writes "*whenever your obedience is complete*" meaning you have come as far as you will in obeying Christ.

2Cr 10:7

## 2) Judging Not According to Outward Appearance vs 7-11

You are looking at things as they are outwardly.

- Here is a statement in which we all fall short in all too often.
- Historians have tried to come up with what Paul looked like. A second century Bishop of Asia, Pseudo-Chrysostom, wrote "he was short, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked." Some believed his voice squeaked. It is strongly believed that he had an infirmity that affected his eyes with difficulty in seeing and with some sort of oozing substance.
- Paul is addressing the error of the Corinthians. They are judging their ministers by the exterior standards of acceptability. How does he look, how does he sound, or who does he hang out with. Paul addresses this and tells them it is the heart they need to judge.

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.

- He is saying just as you are a Christian because of an inward heart change, so are we. It is the heart that has changed not the physical form.

2Cr 10:8

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,

2Cr 10:9

for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

2Cr 10:10

For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible."

- Paul doesn't want to boast about himself. Authority is given to build up not to tear down.
- **Mark 10:42-44** "Jesus said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. "But it is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."
- But he realizes that the Corinthians think that Paul presents himself in two different ways.
  - 1) In Letters - Strong, Knowledgeable, Authoritative, Very Impressive
  - 2) In Person - meek or gentle taken as weakness and unsure, and his speech, well they had heard better, and his appearance didn't fit what they had imagined from his writings.

2Cr 10:11

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.

- For those who judge in this outward manner, Paul will be coming to show them how impressive he can be toward them who are in error.
- Paul says the heart is the same.
- Referring back to verse 7 to "consider within" - The Heart

2Cr 10:12

## 3) Boasting Not According to a Wrong Measure vs 12-18

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.

Will Not Compare Ourselves With Ourselves

- Paul is not going to allow himself to compare himself to those who are his critics in Corinth. No because he doesn't like them or is angry with them. But because the entire "comparing process" is not wise.
- These are the problems with comparing yourself among yourselves.
  - You assume the standard for someone else
  - Someone else is assumed as the standard for you
  - You can always find someone less or greater than yourself in all kinds of areas
  - The standard is a human standard not the Word of God
  - The fellowship of the saints become a competition
- **Philippians 2:3** "Do nothing \*from \*selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves"

- 2Cr 10:13 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.
- 2Cr 10:14 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;  
Will Not Exaggerate
- God has given each an assignment. Our ministries are to fulfill the plan of God in that calling.
  - The measure of the sphere is the scope or range of God's assignment for us. Some have a large scope, some have a smaller scope. It is error to extend or exaggerate the assignment.
  - It is wrong to take liberties in testimonies of the Lords work in your sphere. What the Lord accomplished doesn't need to be embellished by man to make it more acceptable to man.
  - It is also wrong to "overextend" the calling the Lord places on you.
  - Paul says his sphere or measure reached to the Corinthians.
- 2Cr 10:15 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,
- 2Cr 10:16 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.  
Will Not Take for Ourselves Another Man's Accomplishment
- Paul's critics were attacking Paul so they themselves would be in the position to be in the place of influence that Paul had.
  - We run it to this very same thing when we hear men putting down or criticizing another. Many times this is done to put the critic in the position of the expert; the one who should be listened to.
  - Some come to a fellowship to find a place for them to have for themselves a place to minister. Their name in ministry and their ministry development is what is important.
  - Paul says that what is important is the people's growth in faith. The people; the object of the ministry is the focus not the title or position of a minister.
- 2Cr 10:17 But HE WHO BOASTS IS TO BOAST IN THE LORD.
- 2Cr 10:18 For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.
- This quote is from **Jeremiah 9:23-24** "Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD."
  - I've been in Churches that give out certificates once a year to honor the service of people in the congregation. It is an interesting thing. When sitting there you hope to be recognized for your work that you did. It was great! It was a sacrifice. But then you get called and honored. The most amazing feeling comes over. "Is this why I did my service?" "To receive honor or recognition?" The humbling that takes place. I did my work that the Lord would receive ALL glory, ALL honor, ALL praise. All of a sudden I look at the crown of honor in that certificate and want to cast it away.
  - We should raise a red flag when we hear ministries, or ourselves boast of our accomplishments. Possibly our commending ourselves comes from the root of knowing that the Lord hasn't commended us because of our pride, attitude of superiority or motivation.
  - And possibly our bringing ALL honor to the Lord is the result in knowing that the Lord has commended us. What else would we desire?

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