

II Corinthians

Chapter 10:1-18

¹Now 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!

Now > The commentators agree > Now introduces a whole new section. So different, in fact, that some have felt it was written at a different time.

As with the Lord Jesus > Paul is gracious with those who want to know, very clear with those who are heading in the wrong direction, and confrontational with those in leadership that actively steer folks away from Him. You will see all three of these in this chapter.

I, Paul, myself > (Staley) "This emphatic stress on his own person is the fit introduction to the portion of the epistle which, beyond any other part of his writings, is to lay open his individual life and character"

Constable > Whenever he described himself as "I Paul" (and here "myself"), he made his point with strong emphasis (cf. **Gal. 5:2; Eph. 3:1; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:18; 2 Thess. 3:17; Phile. 19**).

Gal. 5:2 > ²Look! I, Paul, tell you that if you have yourselves circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you.

Eph. 3:1 > ¹For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles

Col. 1:23 > ²³if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

1 Thess. 2:18 > ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and Satan hindered us.

2 Thess. 3:17 > ¹⁷I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.

Phile. 19 > ¹⁹I, Paul, have written this with my own hand, I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well).

Meekness > (Strong's) gentleness

Gentleness > (Strong's) fairness, gentleness. Usage > considerateness, forbearance, fairness, gentleness, mildness.

Helps Word Studies > from (a word meaning) "on, fitting," which intensifies (a word meaning) "reasonable, fair, equitable," *equity* ("justice-beyond-justice").

Of Christ > Paul is referencing the Meekness and Gentleness of the Lord as he opens this last section (chapters 10-13)

Meek > (The KJV translates the word as *base*) Strong's shows it to be a different word than is translated as *meekness* earlier in this verse. That word was *prautis* > *gentleness*. This word is *tapeinos* > *low-lying, lowly, lowly in spirit*.

Wuest Translation > *am grovelling, slavish, mean-spirited*

Who am meek when face to face ... > (Utley) Some examples of the charges levied against Paul.

1. He was condescending when face to face, but courageous in his letters
 - a. 2 Cor. 10:1,9,11.
2. He was acting from the lowest human motives
 - a. 2 Cor. 10:2.
3. His personal appearance was not pleasant and his rhetorical delivery was poor
 - a. 2 Cor. 10:2,10
4. He preached simply for money
 - a. 2 Cor. 11:8,12; 12:16.

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.

Ask > (Strong's) to want, entreat (NASB Translation > ask (1), beg (6), begged (1), begging (2), beseech (2), implored (1), making request (1), please (1), pray (2), prayed (3), praying (2).

Intend > (Strong's) to reckon, to consider

Courageous > (Strong's) to have courage, to be bold

MacArthur > Because of his compassionate desire to spare the rebels, Paul called on them to repent. If they did, when he was present with them he would not need to be bold with the confidence he had in his authority. The aorist infinitive form of *tharrhe* (bold) is ingressive, meaning, "to become courageous."

Vincent > Literally it is: *I pray the not showing courage when present, with the confidence, etc.* The sense is: I pray you that you may not make it necessary for me to show, when I am present, that official peremptoriness which I am minded to show against those who charge me with unworthy motives.

Have you ever talked to an individual who was a black belt in a martial arts discipline? What was their feeling about the possibility of having to use their skill set in a fight?

Who regard us as if we walked ACCORDING TO the flesh. > Compare this phrase to the one immediately below > **though we walk IN the flesh** > the accusation was that Paul walked "according to the dictates of the flesh". Paul responds with the fact that he walked as a human ... "in the flesh" BUT he isn't waging a fleshly war. See verse 3 below.

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage battle according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

Wuest Translation > *For, though we are ordering our behavior in the sphere, of human experience, not in accordance with mere human considerations are we waging warfare, for the weapons of our warfare are not human but mighty in God's sight*

for the destruction of fortresses

(Strong's) fortresses

(MacArthur) also a word used for prisons and a tomb

⁵We are destroying arguments

(Strong's) a reasoning, a thought

and all arrogance raised against the knowledge of God

(Strong's) height, that which is lifted up

and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

(Utley) The verb is a compound of "spear" and "to capture in battle."

⁶and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

Ready > (Strong's) prepared

Punish > (Strong's) to vindicate, to avenge

Disobedience > (Robertson) Rare word (Plato, papyri) hearing amiss (aside), failing to hear, refusing to heed

Whenever your obedience is complete > (Constable) Paul was "ready" to come to Corinth, and to "punish all disobedience" to God's will and his own apostolic authority. However, he wanted to do that only after the whole church had made a clean break with the rebels in its midst ("whenever your obedience is complete"). If the church would not stand with him in disciplining his unrepentant opponents, his discipline would not be effective.

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.

Constable > At least one critic seems to have been claiming that he had received apostolic authority from Christ, which would have been every bit as binding as Paul's, if not more binding. Paul did not dispute this claim here, but simply argued that his own authority was from Christ ("so also are we"). The critic and Paul both claimed to belong to Christ as His apostles. It was unfair for the Corinthians to accept the claim of the critic and to deny Paul's claim.

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, ⁹ for I do not want to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters.

Which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you > These are not idle words from Paul. Again and again he chooses words and concepts designed to encourage his readers when he could have leveled them.

Swindoll > Near the end of the letter (**2 Cor. 13:10**), Paul reveals the reason for the difference in tone > ¹⁰ For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

¹⁰ For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive 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.

They say > (Vincent) The correct reading is > says he ... The reference is to some well-known opponent.

Presence is unimpressive > (Barnes) Is weak - Imbecile, feeble - a word often used to denote infirmity of body, sickness, disease; **Matthew 25:39**, Matthew 25:43-44; **Luke 10:9**; Acts 4:9; **Acts 5:15-16**; 1 Corinthians 11:30.

Matthew 25:39 >³⁹ And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

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Luke 10:9 >⁹ and heal those in it who are sick, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

Acts 5:15 >¹⁵ to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any of them.

Contemptible > (Strong’s) to despise, treat with contempt

Utley > This is a strong Greek term. Paul was not a polished public speaker (i.e., Greek rhetorical style). Apollos was the eloquent, rhetorically trained preacher from Alexandria. However, Paul claims that though unskilled in rhetorical style (cf. 2 Cor. 11:6), his message and authority were from Christ.

Wuest Translation > Let such a one take into account this fact that the kind of person we are in our discourse through our letters when we are absent, such are we also in action when we are present.

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.**

Rank > (Strong’s) to judge in, to reckon among. Usage > I count among

For we do not presume to rank or compare ourselves ... > At first blush the question can be asked, “But isn’t this what Paul is doing?” Then you look at his “proof” sources and compare them to those used by the false prophets who have come into Corinth ... the literally calling of the Lord in his life, the change in his life, the churches planted, the salvation of souls, the growth of those individuals, and the miracles performed.

When they measure themselves by themselves > (Robertson) Keenest sarcasm. Setting themselves up as the standards of orthodoxy these Judaizers always measure up to the standard while Paul falls short.

Constable > They cited their own conduct as normative, and then prided themselves on measuring up to their own artificial standard.

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.** 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;**

But we will not boast beyond our measure > (MacArthur) At this point Paul did not deny their claim; he would do that later in his argument (2 Cor. 11:13–15). Here he merely noted that he, too, had a valid claim to belong to Jesus Christ.

Domain > (Strong's) a rule, standard

HELPS Word Studies > properly, a rod (bar) used as a *measuring standard*, originally, a *cane or reed* used as a *standard of measure*; (figuratively) a *rule*; a *standard or norm*

Assigned > (Strong's) to divide (from a word meaning > *a part, share, or portion*)

To reach even as far as you > (Vincent) Corinth being thus far the extreme limit of the field measured out for him. (until Rome)

For we are not overextending ourselves > (Vincent) It is not as if God had not appointed our apostolic labor to reach to you. If He had not thus appointed, then our desire to labor among you would have been an overstretching of ourselves. Therefore, in boasting of our labor in Corinth, we do not boast beyond our measure.

Remember the Lord's vision to Paul? Acts 18:9-11 >⁹ *And the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city." 11 And he settled there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

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, 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.

Not boasting beyond our measure, that is, in other people's labors > He just nailed the false prophets again

Even to the regions beyond you > (Wiersbe) Paul added another bit of “holy irony” when he told the Corinthians that the only thing that had kept him from going to “the regions beyond” them was their own lack of faith. Had they been submissive to his leadership and obedient to the Word, he could have reached other lost souls; but they created so many problems for him that he had to take time from missionary evangelism to solve the problems in the church. “I would have better statistics to report,” he was saying, “but you hindered me.”

¹⁷ **But the one who boasts is to boast in the Lord.**

But the one who boasts is to boast in the Lord > (Utley) This is a quote from the Septuagint of **Jer. 9:23-24 >** ²³Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, and let not the strong man boast in his strength, and let not the rich man boast in his wealth; ²⁴but let him that boasts boast in this, the understanding and knowing that I am the Lord that exercise mercy, and judgment, and righteousness, upon the earth; for in these things is my pleasure, saith the Lord.

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

Wuest Translation > for not he who recommends himself, that one is accepted after having been put to the test, but he whom the Lord recommends, that one has His stamp of approval placed upon him, that approval being based upon the fact that the approved one has met the test satisfactorily.