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2 Corinthians 10: My Boast, My Fight, My Reward

Introductory Statement: In chapter 10 of this letter to the church at Corinth, the Apostle Paul, continues to address those who doubt his appointment and authority as an Apostle. His love for the church that he'd planted there moves him to respond to those whom he would otherwise ignore. Paul moves forward to share his focus about the real battle in which he, and the church, is engaged.

Summary Points:

- What Christ-like qualities do Paul demonstrate?
- What issue is Paul confronting?
- What is the real battle that Paul is fighting and with whom?
- What is the basis of Paul's authority to minister to the Corinthian church?
- What is the highest commendation that Paul references?

Objectives: As a result of our study today we will examine each of the summary points and their inherent, practical applications for our daily lives.

THE FOUNDATION (Review)

The Issue

1. As with nearly every place that he plants a church, Paul deals with Judaizers and "Super Apostles"
 - a. Judaizers – Jewish (some) converts who believe that gentiles (non-jews) must keep the tenants of the Jewish faith in addition to accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, by Faith



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- b. Super Apostles – Non-commissioned Apostles who challenged Paul’s authority at every chance, in hopes of gaining followers for themselves.
 - i. Apostolic Requirements – (Acts 1:21-22 NLT)
 - ²¹ “So now we must choose a replacement for Judas from among the men who were with us the entire time we were traveling with the Lord Jesus—
 - ²² from the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken from us. Whoever is chosen will join us as a witness of Jesus’ resurrection.”
 - (a) Be with Jesus
 - (b) An eyewitness of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead
 - ii. An Apostle is one who is ‘sent’ – can’t just go

THE STRUCTURE

PAUL FINDS HIMSELF HAVING TO DEFEND HIMSELF FOR THE SAKE OF THOSE FOR/WHOM HE LABORED TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- 1. Paul Confronts the Accusations
 - a. Paul models Christ’s character when addressing the character assassinations (2 Corinthians 10:1 NLT)

Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ—though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold only when I write from far away.

 - i. I appeal with Gentleness (Meekness) – greek “prau’tes” – power with reserve; begins with the Lord’s inspiration and finishes by His direction and empowerment; a divinely balanced virtue that is operated through faith.
 - ii. He appeals with Kindness (Gentleness) – greek “epiei’keia” – that which is fitting; fair; equitable and sweetly reasonable
 - iii. Personal application –



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- (a) Gentleness and Kindness, fruit of the spirit, must be accessed when dealing with God's people. (Galatians 5:22-23 NLT)

^{5:22} But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

- (b) Accessing this quality is by faith, not feeling (Galatians 5:16,25-26 NLT)

^{5:16} So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

- (c) Seek the High Road (Colossians 3:1-3, 7-10 NLT)

^{3:1} Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ² Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ³ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁷ You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸ But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

- (d) Stay Dead (Galatians 2:20 NLT)

^{2:20} My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- b. You think that I'm Timid when in your presence and only bold when I'm away
- i. Timid – greek “tapei'nos” - lowly in spirit; inner lowliness which describes one who depends on the Lord rather than self; God-reliant rather than self-



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reliant

- ii. They forgot or were unaware of how Paul persecuted the church (Acts 7:57-58; 8:1-3 NLT)

^{7:57}Then they put their hands over their ears and began shouting. They rushed at him ⁵⁸and dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. His accusers took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. ^{8:1}A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. ²(Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.) ³But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

- iii. Paul confronted Peter openly about his hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11-16 NLT)

^{2:11}But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. ¹²When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile believers, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. ¹³As a result, other Jewish believers followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?" ¹⁵"You and I are Jews by birth, not 'sinners' like the Gentiles. ¹⁶Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."



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- iv. Personal Application – Operating by Faith in this capacity begins with a decision (Philippians 2:5)

^{2:5} You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

(a) You must give permission to your soul to have Faith dominate/rule

- a. I'm not trying to frighten you by placing demands or using force (2 Corinthians 10:9-11 NLT)

^{10:9} I'm not trying to frighten you by my letters. ¹⁰ For some say, "Paul's letters are demanding and forceful, but in person he is weak, and his speeches are worthless!" ¹¹ Those people should realize that our actions when we arrive in person will be as forceful as what we say in our letters from far away.

- i. Frighten – greek "ekphobe'o" – to terrify; frighten away (out of one's wits)
- ii. If the situation calls for it, I'll use that
- iii. My in-person speeches are worthless – greek "exouthene'o"
cast out as nothing; treated with utter contempt; zero; despised; lacking any standing (value) (1 Corinthians 2:3-8 NLT)

^{2:3} I came to you in weakness—timid and trembling. ⁴ And my message and my preaching were very plain. Rather than using clever and persuasive speeches, I relied only on the power of the Holy Spirit. ⁵ I did this so you would trust not in human wisdom but in the power of God. ⁶ Yet when I am among mature believers, I do speak with words of wisdom, but not the kind of wisdom that belongs to this world or to the rulers of this world, who are soon forgotten. ⁷ No, the wisdom we speak of is the mystery of God—his plan that was previously hidden, even though he made it for our ultimate glory before the world began. ⁸ But the rulers of this world have not understood it; if they had, they would not have crucified our glorious Lord.



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2. Paul also addresses the Accusers

- a. My Haters must admit that I belong to Christ as much as they do
(2 Corinthians 10:7 NLT)

^{10:7} Look at the obvious facts. Those who say they belong to Christ must recognize that we belong to Christ as much as they do.

- b. I boldly use my Christ-Given Authority to build you up, not tear you down
(2 Corinthians 10:8 NLT)

^{10:8} I may seem to be boasting too much about the authority given to us by the Lord. But our authority builds you up; it doesn't tear you down. So I will not be ashamed of using my authority.

- c. I'm not trying to be like them. I aim higher
(2 Corinthians 10:12 NLT)

^{10:12} Oh, don't worry; we wouldn't dare say that we are as wonderful as these other men who tell you how important they are! But they are only comparing themselves with each other, using themselves as the standard of measurement. How ignorant!

- d. My authority is grounded in the work I've done, namely you Corinthians
(2 Corinthians 10:13-14 NLT)

^{10:13} We will not boast about things done outside our area of authority. We will boast only about what has happened within the boundaries of the work God has given us, which includes our working with you. ¹⁴ We are not reaching beyond these boundaries when we claim authority over you, as if we had never visited you. For we were the first to travel all the way to Corinth with the Good News of Christ.

- e. I don't take credit for or boast about, work that someone else has done
(2 Corinthians 10:15a, 18a NLT)



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^{15a} Nor do we boast and claim credit for the work someone else has done.

^{18a} When people commend themselves, it doesn't count for much.

3. Paul discusses the Real Battle (2 Corinthians 10:3-6 NLT)

^{10:3} We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. ⁴ We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. ⁵ We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ. ⁶ And after you have become fully obedient, we will punish everyone who remains disobedient.

a. I'm human, but I don't fight on this level

i. Paul doesn't throw punches, use knives, or carry a piece

b. My enemies are operating behind what's visible

i. Strongholds of Human Reasoning – greek “logismos”- conception; bottom-line reasoning that reflects personal values; personally assigned weight in determining what is reasonable; reaching a personal opinion (comes out of personal reckoning)

(a) Stronghold – a fortress of lies satan builds in your heart and mind. God wants us to tear down these structures. What undermines and destroys a lie? The TRUTH!...only when TRUTH is believed and acted upon...
(Jim Logan, Reclaiming Surrendered Ground)

ii. False Arguments – Deception – when your mind and emotions believe something that isn't true – J. Logan

iii. Proud Obstacles that keep people from knowing God

iv. Rebellious Thoughts

v. Evil Rulers and Authorities of the unseen world (Ephesians 6:12 NLT)



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¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

- vi. Mighty powers in this dark world
- vii. Evil spirits in the heavenlies
- c. I use God's mighty weapons (Ephesians 6: 10-11, 13-18 NLT)

^{6:10} A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. ¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. ¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.

- i. Strengthened by the Lord's Power
- ii. Belt of Truth
- iii. Body Armor of God's Righteous
- iv. Good News Shoes of Peace
- v. Shield of Faith
- vi. Sword of the Spirit – God's Word
- vii. Pray in the Spirit at All times, on Every occasion
- viii. Stay Alert
- ix. Persistence



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The Decor

- What It's All About (2 Corinthians 10: 15b-16)
^{15b} Instead, we hope that your faith will grow so that the boundaries of our work among you will be extended. ¹⁶ Then we will be able to go and preach the Good News in other places far beyond you, where no one else is working.
 - I want you to grow in Faith
 - Christ's ministry through me will increase and expand
 - Boasting in the Lord Jesus
 - Receiving our Lord's Commendation
- What is this journey all about to you?
- What is your response toward those who slander and accuse you?
- What is your Real battle?
- Jesus, the Christ, says Come...
 - Repent
 - Receive HIS forgiveness
 - Accept HIS Gifts of the Holy Spirit and His Promises
 - Expect HIS Goodness in your life

