

# HOW TO WAGE SPIRITUAL WARFARE

2 Cor. 10:1-6



**EVERY**

Member | Event | Time

NEW MERCIES CHRISTIAN CHURCH | JOHN 4: 28-30

Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 664–665.

## 2 Corinthians 10:1–6 (NKJV)

1 Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

# Accusation

vv.1-2

## 2 Corinthians 10:1–2 (NKJV)

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- The Corinthians' regard for Paul had been steadily undermined both by actions on his part that they have misconstrued and by the encroachment of rivals who made inroads by disdainfully comparing Paul to themselves.
- Because these mischief makers have met with an embarrassing measure of success, Paul has found himself in the uncomfortable position of having to defend himself against their annoying smear campaign and to explain his deportment as an apostle.

- Paul is compelled to answer criticism that he is weak and cowardly (10:1, 10; 11:7; 13:3–4), that he somehow lacks apostolic power (12:12), and that his refusal to accept support from the Corinthians and to work at a trade instead denigrates his apostleship and reflects badly on them (11:7–9; 12:13–18; see 1 Cor 9:3–18).
- He in turn reproves the Corinthians for allowing bogus apostles to drive a wedge between them and for failing to defend him against their defamation of his character (12:11).
- Paul was in spiritual warfare!

David E. Garland, , vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 424.

# Accusation

vv.1-2

- The church of Corinth was rebellious church (led by the Judaizers) said that Paul was very courageous when he wrote letters from a distance, but very timid and even weak when he was present with the Corinthians.

# Accusation

vv.1-2

## 2 Corinthians 10:9–11 (NKJV)

9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

10 “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”

11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.



# Overbearing Attitudes

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- The Judaizers, of course, were consistently overbearing in their attitudes—and the people loved them (2 Cor. 11:20).

## **2 Corinthians 11:20** (NKJV)

For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

Paul's *"inconsistent"*  
manner of life  
paralleled his *"yes and  
no"* approach to  
making promises.

## 2 Corinthians 1:15–20 (NKJV)

15 And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit—

16 to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.

17 Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

18 But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.

19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.

20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

When Paul founded the church at Corinth, his purpose was to exalt Christ and not himself.

(1 Cor. 2:1–5)

- Christians usually grow the way they are born.
- If they are born in an atmosphere of dictatorial leadership, they grow up depending on man's wisdom and strength.
- If they are born in an atmosphere of humility and love, they learn to depend on the Lord.
- Paul wanted his converts to trust the Lord, and not the servant; so he deliberately “played down” his own authority and ability.

# The Church Failed To Realize True Spiritual Power

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- They failed to realize that true spiritual power is in “meekness and gentleness” (2 Cor. 10:1), not in “throwing weight around.”

## **Matthew 5:5 (NKJV)**

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

# 1 Peter 3:15–16 (NKJV)

**15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

**16** having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

- Paul's attitude in these opening verses disarmed his opponents. *(In fact, his use of his own name is significant; for Paul means "little.")*



- If Paul was a weakling, then so was Jesus Christ; for Jesus exhibited meekness and gentleness.

## **Matthew 11:29 (NKJV)**

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

# Jesus Was Also Stern

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- The Lord could also be stern and even angry when the occasion demanded it.

## **Matthew 15:1–2 (NKJV)**

1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

2 “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”

## **Mark 11:15–17 (NKJV)**

**15** So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

**16** And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

**17** Then He taught, saying to them, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ”

- Paul was warning them in a loving way, “Please don’t force me to come and show how bold I can be!”

# The Answer

(vv. 3–6)

## 2 Corinthians 10:3–6 (NKJV)

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,  
5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

6 and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

# The Answer

(vv. 3–6)

- This reveals what spiritual warfare is all about.
- Because the Corinthians (led by the false teachers) judged Paul's ministry by the outward appearance, they completely missed the power that was there.
- They were evaluating things “according to the flesh” (2 Cor. 10:2) and not according to the Spirit.

- The Judaizers, like some “great religious personalities” today, impressed the people with their overpowering abilities, their oratorical powers, and their “commendations” from church leaders.

## 2 Timothy 3:2–5 (NKJV)

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,  
3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,  
4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,  
5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!



- Paul took a different approach; for, though he was as human as anyone else, he did not depend on the human but on the divine, the spiritual weapons provided by the Lord.
- His warfare was not according to the flesh, because he was not fighting against flesh and blood.

# Ephesians 6:10–12 (NKJV)

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

- You cannot fight spiritual battles with carnal weapons.

# Warfare

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- The word *warfare* in 2 Corinthians 10:4 means “campaign.”
- Paul was not simply fighting a little skirmish in Corinth; the attack of the enemy there was part of a large satanic campaign.
- The powers of hell are still trying to destroy the work of God, and it is important that we not yield any ground to the enemy, not even one church!

# Don't Give Up Ground!

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## **Matthew 16:18–19 (NKJV)**

**18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**19** And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

# Don't Give Up Ground!

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- There are walls of resistance in the minds of people, and these walls (like the walls of Jericho) must be pulled down.
- What are these “mental walls”? Reasoning's that are opposed to the truth of God's Word. Pride of intelligence that exalts itself.

# Don't Give Up Ground!

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## 2 Timothy 3:7–8 (NKJV)

7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;

# Don't Give Up Ground!

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- Paul was not attacking intelligence, but intellectualism, the high-minded attitude that makes people think they know more than they really do.

## **Romans 12:16** (NKJV)

Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

# Don't Give Up Ground!

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- Paul had faced this “wisdom of men” when he founded the church, and it had surfaced again with the coming of the Judaizers.



# Don't Give Up Ground!

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## 1 Corinthians 1:17–18 (NKJV)

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

# The Strongest Weapon

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- Paul's attitude of humility was actually one of his strongest weapons, for pride plays right into the hands of Satan.
- The meek Son of God had far more power than Pilate, and He proved it.

## **John 19:11** (NKJV)

Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

- Paul used spiritual weapons to tear down the opposition—prayer, the Word of God, love, the power of the Spirit at work in his life.

## **1 Corinthians 1:19** (NKJV)

For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.”

- This he quoted Isaiah 29:14. You must use the word of God when correcting the saints not man’s wisdom.

# Depend On Things Of The Spirit!

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- He did not depend on personality, human abilities, or even the authority he had as an apostle.

# Depend On Things Of The Spirit!

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## **Philippians 4:8–9** (NKJV)

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

- However, he was ready to punish the offenders, if necessary, once the congregation had submitted to the Lord.

## **2 Corinthians 10:6** (NKJV)

and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

## **2 Corinthians 13:2** (NKJV)

I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare—

## **2 Corinthians 13:10** (NKJV)

Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

# We Must Use Spiritual Methods To Win!

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- Many believers today do not realize that the church is involved in warfare, and those who do understand the seriousness of the Christian battle do not always know how to fight the battle.
- They try to use human methods to defeat demonic forces, and these methods are doomed to fail.



# We Must Use Spiritual Methods To Win!

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- When Joshua and his army marched around Jericho for a week, the spectators thought they were mad.
- When the Jews trusted God and obeyed orders, they brought down the high walls and conquered the enemy (Josh. 6:1–20).