

2 Corinthians 10

The Corinthian church had a tendency to judge spiritual things by earthly standards. Therefore Paul, a godly man if ever there was one, did not seem to measure up in the eyes of some of them. In this chapter Paul tries to clarify the issue for them. They need to begin seeing things from God's perspective rather than through the eyes of this world.

In the unseen, spiritual realm a serious war is raging. Our duty is to take up our weapons and fight.

- I. We have to wage spiritual warfare with weapons provided by God. 10:1-6
- II. To be successful in spiritual warfare we have to be godly people. 10:7-11
- III. The quality of spiritual efforts has to be judged by God's own standards. 10:12-18

- I. We have to wage spiritual warfare with weapons provided by God. 10:1-6

- A. Paul reminds the Corinthian church, which was constantly fighting, that the real battles they face – the more serious ones – are on the spiritual, not the material, plane.

- B. The evil that we see in the world most often has a spiritual component to it. The devil may use people to accomplish his purposes, but those people are normally deceived. They don't realize that they are destroying themselves. They don't realize that they are in bondage.

- C. Don't get caught up in the earthly battles to the point where they take your focus away from God.

- D. How do we pull down strongholds? How do we cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God? How do we bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ? How do we properly engage in spiritual warfare? We do so with spiritual weapons. Ephesians 6 is worth examining in this regard.

Ephesians 6:10-20 NKJV ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For 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. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints— ¹⁹and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

E. An effective response to the evils of this world must make use of prayer and word of God. Those are the offensive weapons at our disposal.

1. The word of God gives people the truth which can overcome the error they have been force fed since the day they were born. It's only through the Bible that we know that God made the world, but that human sin has corrupted it. We know that God hasn't completely judged the human race, but sent Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Through the Word of God we understand that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and is coming again to judge those who oppose Him.

2. Through the Scriptures we also know that God answers prayer. We should pray for one another and, as Paul asks, we should pray for the effective preaching of the gospel so that more sinners like us can be saved.

In the unseen, spiritual realm a serious war is raging. Our duty is to take up our weapons and fight.

II. To be successful in spiritual warfare we have to be godly people. 10:7-11

A. 10:10 Some of the Corinthians didn't think much of Paul. Their issues with him had nothing to do with his integrity or his grasp of the Scriptures. They had nothing to do with his character or his ability to teach them right from wrong. The issues they had pertained to the way he looked and the way he spoke. In other words, they had no real clue about judging spiritual things.

B. In the Pastoral Epistles, Paul gives us some lists of things to look for to tell who is qualified for spiritual leadership. Interestingly neither looks nor being a dynamic speaker is among them.

First Timothy 3:1-13 NKJV ¹This is a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a bishop [overseer, elder, pastor], he desires a good work. ²A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; ³not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; ⁴one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence ⁵(for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); ⁶not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. ⁷Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

⁸Likewise deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, ⁹holding the mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. ¹⁰But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. ¹¹Likewise, their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. ¹³For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-9 NKJV ⁵For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders [overseers, pastors] in every city as I commanded you— ⁶if a man is blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination. ⁷For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, ⁸but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, ⁹holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

In the unseen, spiritual realm a serious war is raging. Our duty is to take up our weapons and fight.

III. The quality of spiritual efforts has to be judged by God's own standards. 10:12-18

A. 10:12 Some of the Corinthian teachers were in sort of a contest regarding which of them was the greatest. The apostles used to do the same thing when Jesus wasn't looking.

B. Comparisons can be really off base, "not wise," as Paul says. God isn't grading on a curve. If I look at others and say, "I may be wrong but at least I'm not as wrong as they are." On the other hand, I may judge myself too harshly and think I don't measure up to what others have accomplished.

1. Comparisons with others can make us jealous.
2. Comparisons with others can make us discouraged.
3. Comparisons with others can make us proud of our own accomplishments.
4. When we compare ourselves to Jesus, we'll see that we fall way short of the mark and we'll be motivated to take the help He offers to make us faithful to the calling He has placed upon our lives.
5. That can also be huge: Simple faithfulness to our calling. One of my favorite stories in this respect is that of the prophet Amos. He was confronted by Amaziah, the idolatrous priest of Bethel. Amaziah was the priest of a shrine to a golden calf-idol that had already stood in Israel for centuries by the time Amos came along.

Amos 7:12-15 NKJV ¹²Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go, you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread, And there prophesy.

¹³ But never again prophesy at Bethel, For it is the king's sanctuary, And it is the royal residence."

[In other words, "Shut up and go away! We don't want you here.]

¹⁴Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah: "I was no prophet, Nor was I a son of a prophet, But I was a sheepbreeder And a tender of sycamore fruit.

¹⁵ Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, And the Lord said to me,

'Go, prophesy to My people Israel.' **[And when the Lord tells you to do something, you better do it.]**

Conclusions:

- I. We have to wage spiritual warfare with weapons provided by God. 10:1-6
- II. To be successful in spiritual warfare we have to be godly people. 10:7-11
- III. The quality of spiritual efforts has to be judged by God's own standards. 10:12-18