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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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**"WARFARE WEAPONS"**

**2 Corinthians 10:1-11**

***II Corinthians 10:1-2***

***1 "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence [am] base among you, but being absent am bold toward you:"***

***2 "But I beseech [you], that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh***."

In anticipation of his next visit and with an increased awareness of problems with opponents at Corinth, Paul finished this epistle with a passionate defense of his apostolic authority. The unity of the letter is established by the continuing themes of Paul’s defense of his ministry and his exhortation to the Corinthians. Some of the Corinthians were being influenced by false teachers who had infiltrated the church. It seemed as if the person who was bringing in the false teaching was, also, attacking the character of Paul. They had accused Paul as walking after the flesh. Paul would stand up boldly and denounce this false accusation. Paul pleads with the believers in a spirit of meekness and gentleness to listen to him to avoid his having to boldly confront those who were behaving according to the flesh and had accused Paul of being self-serving. "Base", in verse 1, means humiliated, depressed, cast down, humble, or of low degree. Paul is saying that his person is not overwhelming to anyone. We will find in this chapter that Paul is answering some of the accusations made by people who were trying to change the church at Corinth and its teachings. Jesus was meek and gentle, until someone started making God's house a house of merchandise. Paul is saying that he can say what is really in his heart in this letter. His boldness comes from righteous indignation for the false teaching that was trying to creep into the church at Corinth. He might seem base to them, but when it came to matters of God, he was bold. Paul was willing to exercise discipline in person with the confidence that he has the authority to do so but appealed that he would not need to act this way. There was still time to repent and obey. Paul was a small man, possibly plain in appearance, and was not an overwhelming speaker. He was, however, very talented in writing his thoughts down.

***II Corinthians 10:3-4***

***3 "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:"***

***4 "(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"***

Paul’s opponents, and those who were siding with them, argued that Paul was walking according to the flesh, i.e., that his actions were devoid of supernatural power. Paul conceded that he lived a physical existence (in the flesh, v. 3), but the war he was about to wage against his opponents would be evidence of divine power (not according to the flesh). He would use weapons that would destroy the fortress, the opposing arguments, of his opponents.

***Ephesians 6:13-17***

***13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.***

***14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;***

***15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;***

***16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.***

***17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:***

The apostle Paul is willing to go to battle against false apostles because he does not wage war according to the flesh. The Christian is in the world, but not of the world. Paul is saying, here, I may be housed in flesh, but I am not a flesh man. The battles that Paul had been fighting were spiritual battles. His weapons were spiritual, as well. The war that Paul was fighting is still going on today. It is the battle between the flesh and the spirit.

***Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high [places]."***

We will find in all of Paul's battles, he did not use a sword to fight a physical battle. God fought Paul's battles for him. One very good example of that, is when the viper bit Paul at the fire. Paul shook off the poisonous serpent and won the people over. God was Paul's very present help in trouble, and He is ours, as well. We must learn to trust Him as Paul did. He recognized that the warfare in which he is engaged is spiritual and requires spiritual weapons that are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. By “strongholds,” Paul isn’t talking about physical fortresses, of course, but about destructive patterns of thought that lead people astray and hold them hostage to sinful, harmful and addictive behavior. We know Paul is concerned with the mind because he is demolishing arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and he wants to help believers take every thought captive to obey Christ. Satan’s strategy is to block the knowledge and or application of God’s Word in the thinking of believers so that they can be held hostage by his lies, which are communicated through false teaching. If addictive behavior is present in a person’s life, that behavior is not the stronghold but merely its fruit. Strongholds can only be demolished by the knowledge of God—that is, by truth. When your relationship to the living Word connects to the written Word, “you really will be free”. If you’re not taking every thought captive to obey Christ and are instead succumbing to a stronghold, it’s because you either don’t know the truth or aren’t making use of the truth you know.

***John 8:32-36***

***32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.***

***33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?***

***34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.***

***35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.***

***36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.***

***II Corinthians 10:5-6***

***5 "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;"***

***6 "And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."***

Paul’s warfare strategy and battle plan was threefold: (1) demolish the fortresses, defined as false reasoning and arrogant argumentation that keep people from a true knowledge of God; (2) take captive wrong thinking with the goal of conforming that thinking to the gospel; and, after some obey Paul’s appeal, (3) punish those who remain disobedient when Paul visits. You can sit around and imagine all sorts of terrible things. Paul says cast them down. Do not allow yourself to start imagining all sorts of terrible things. Run away from anything, or anyone, opposed to the knowledge of God. The mind is where evil imaginations begin. The devil tempts man in his mind. The mind is an enemy of God. A true Christian takes on the mind of Christ. This means our mind obeys Christ to the utmost.

***I Peter 1:13 "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;"***

Paul is saying that he had rather his preaching and explaining would win them, but he will do more if he has to. Paul warns that he and his coworkers are ready to punish any disobedience, once the Corinthians’ obedience is complete. In order for Paul to deal effectively with the disobedience of the false apostles, the Corinthians would need to be unified in their commitment to the Lord and to Paul by complete not partial obedience. If a minority of the Corinthians still allowed themselves to be influenced by heretical teachers, it would affect the entire church.

***II Corinthians 10:7 "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he [is] Christ's, even so [are] we Christ's."***

Paul is warning the Corinthians to not look at outward appearance. It appears that these troublemakers had even gone so far as to say that Paul was not of Christ. Paul is the one who led them to Christ. How could he lead them to Christ if he were not of Christ himself? He says, if you are of Christ, then certainly I am of Christ. Paul commanded the Corinthians to look at the facts concerning his ministry. The leader of the opposition claimed to have a special relationship with Christ. It was his own claim in himself claim that Paul later rejected.

***2 Corinthians 11:13-15***

***13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.***

***14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.***

***15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.***

***II Corinthians 10:8 "For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:"***

Whatever the false apostles claimed about being authoritative ambassadors for Christ, Paul had greater confidence in his authority as an apostle, which he’d received from the Lord Jesus himself. But he reminds them that he had used his authority for building the church in Corinth up, not for tearing them down as the false apostles had. Paul is saying, if anyone has a right to boast it would be me. The Lord Jesus Christ had appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and gave him authority to minister to the Gentiles. Paul is not meaning this to brag on himself, but to shame them for their bragging. The Lord had raised Paul up, not Paul. Although Paul boasted even more concerning the authority Jesus gave to him at his conversion, he will have no shame in the final judgment because his boast was in the Lord. The primary purpose of his ministry was to build up the church, not to tear it down.

***II Corinthians 10:9***

***9 "That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters."***

***10 "For [his] letters, say they, [are] weighty and powerful; but [his] bodily presence [is] weak, and [his] speech contemptible."***

***11 "Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such [will we be] also in deed when we are present."***

Paul's letters were very strong, but that is what they needed to keep them straightened out. The opponents accused Paul of tearing down the church through his forceful letters (in contrast to a ministry in Corinth that was unimpressive in appearance and oratory). Some of this was certainly true. Paul did write powerful letters to them. Paul had no intention of frightening the Corinthians with his forceful letters but sought to be forthright and bold to lead them to obey Christ. He preferred to do this by written correspondence so that there would be no need for confrontation in person. He, also, was a small man in stature (bodily presence). The name "Paul" means small. He was not a flashy minister. Even his speaking was not as powerful as his letters. God called each of us to our own calling. One can write, another preach, another teach, another heal, and so on. We should use the ability that God has given us to the very fullest amount we can. Paul is saying, do not think that I will let up when I come to you in person. What I have been giving you is truth and will remain the truth. Paul says, it is the same message, whether I write it to you, or give it in a speech before you. Paul’s mission to build up should be applied to his severe writing as well—it too was for their benefit, not to terrify them for the purpose of destruction. His opponents should have realized that his mission of building up would be accomplished both through his deeds when present as well as his letters while absent. The strong words in letters would match his strong deeds in presence. Firm rebuke is sometimes needed to build up the church.

**QUESTIONS**

1. What does "base", in verse 1, mean?
2. What is Paul doing in this chapter?
3. When was Jesus not meek and gentle?
4. What does Paul's boldness come from?
5. Paul was very talented in what?
6. What terrible thing had they been saying about Paul in verse 2?
7. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not \_\_\_\_ after the \_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. What kind of battles had Paul been fighting?
9. Where can you find the armour worn by a Christian?
10. Who fought for Paul?
11. Give a good example of this?
12. What did Paul say to do with imaginations?
13. A true Christian takes on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
14. In verse 7, what does Paul tell them is proof he is of Christ?
15. The Lord Jesus Christ had appeared to Paul on the road to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and gave him \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to minister to the Gentiles.
16. What had Paul used his authority for building the church in Corinth up for?
17. For [his] letters, say they, [are] \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; but [his] bodily \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [is] weak, and [his] speech \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
18. What does the name "Paul" means small.
19. Was Paul a flashy minister?
20. Is firm rebuke sometimes needed to build up the church?