

# **Battlefield Part II**

## **2 Corinthians 10:3-6**

### **Dr. Paul Cannings**

#### **A. Powerful Weapons (v. 4):**

a) Weapons – We must always bear in mind that our focus is to not rely on the flesh as a soldier relies on a gun in battle or as a skydiver relies on a parachute, whether we are on the offensive or defensive in a conversation. This is because the flesh is where sin springs from (Romans 6:12-14). Therefore, the scripture says not to use human logic (Proverbs 3:4-5).

a) Paul views our lives as constantly at war with Satan (Eph. 6:11). Our flesh is an instrument that leads to unrighteousness (Rom. 6:12-14) and death (Rom. 8:6-8), and our weapons are the armor (Eph. 6:13-18).

We can wage successful spiritual warfare only by abandoning worldly ways and attitudes. The Christian's approach is to introduce truth which the Spirit can use to reshape the other person's way of thinking and perceiving. The ways the worldly person "fights" is of no value in achieving this goal.<sup>[1]</sup>

2. Warfare – Warfare means designing a strategy to carry out a military campaign against an opponent. Therefore Paul is saying we cannot design a response to someone attacking us based on how we feel or the logical way we may think. To respond this way is to ignite weapons of the flesh which automatically leads us to sin.

3. Flesh, carnal – To use the flesh is to be governed by human nature with all its weakness, materialistic nature, and its inferiority to deal with spiritual things.

4. Divinely powerful - The arsenal that the Lord provides us (spiritual armor; Ephesians 6:10-18):

a) Rely on the Spirit of God (Romans 8:5-17; John 14:26; 16:7-11)

b) The powerful Word of God (2 Peter 1:3-4; Hebrews 12:4).

- c) The wisdom that comes from God (James 1:5-8; 3:17-18).
  - d) Truth that girds us for action and delivers us from sinful habits (Ephesians 6:14)
  - e) The angels that protect us (Hebrews 1:14), because we now live in heavenly places (Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12).
5. Divinely powerful - To function in the strength of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:16-19) provides us a more lasting, strong, and healthy ability to withstand the problems or enemies we may experience.
6. Destruction –The purpose of the divine power (Ephesians 6:12) is to tear down and overthrow thoughts that can be destructive. The fortresses that Paul is referring to (using Rome warfare as a backdrop) are:
- a) False arguments based on human logic that may make people feel powerful because of the support they have (powerful positions they may have) or the level of education they may have acquired
  - b) Slander; The believers in Corinth and the false teachers slandered Paul which created a lot of division in the church.
  - c) They were not committed to exploring the facts of Paul’s ministry. It was more about how persuasive the false teachers were (2 Corinthians 11; Matthew 18:15-21).
  - d) Sometimes, it is more about how entertaining someone may be rather than discerning the truth about what they are talking about.
7. Fortresses – The strongholds that are like fortresses that represent the arguments, thoughts, and plans that Paul was opposing. Paul cast down all their rationalizations that they adamantly or stubbornly defended.
- a) What are these “mental walls”? They are reasonings that are opposed to the truth of God’s Word. Pride of intelligence that exalts itself. Paul was not attacking intelligence, but intellectualism, the high-minded attitude that makes people think they know more than they really do (Rom. 12:16). [\[2\]](#)
  - b) Paul had faced this “wisdom of men” when he founded the church (1 Cor. 1:18ff), and it surfaced again with the coming of the Judaizers. [\[3\]](#)

8. Fortresses - – Used metaphorically of any strong points or arguments one trusts (2 Corinthians 10:4, Proverbs 10:29; 21:22). When God is allowed to renew the mind, the transforming work of the Holy Spirit tears down these fortresses.

## **B. Tear Down (v. 5):**

1. Destroying speculations - Paul says we are continuously ‘conquering and overpowering’ and taking down imaginations (they argue with words that are not true and based on their own logical processes) with evil intent or false reasoning.
2. Destroying speculations - Speculations, when practiced, can become driven by Satan and his demons (1 Timothy 1:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:23, 26; James 3:13-16).

a) “Arguments” ([NIV, NRSV, TEV](#)) or “speculations” ([NASB](#)) is a technical term for rhetorical or philosophical reasonings; the prisoners of war in this extended metaphor are human thoughts. Cf. Proverbs 21:22.

b) Destroying speculations and capturing every thought; 2 Timothy 3:23-26.

c) The word is probably used here in the sense of a *device* and refers to all the plans of a wicked world. <sup>[4]</sup>

3. Every lofty thing - Every thought that by itself is full of pride (maybe because they are well educated or are in powerful positions) causes a person to raise those thoughts above the knowledge of God (Romans 12:16).

4. Every lofty thing - They had money and felt privileged so instead of giving to God, they hoarded their money and gave grudgingly to God (2 Cor. 8-9).

5. Every lofty thing - A lofty thought is incredibly prideful when we seek to use the Word of God out of context to support our personal convictions.

a) The metaphor is from walls and towers standing defiantly rather than barriers hastily thrown up to check progress. Still, the pass is possible, that is ‘erected,’ ‘set up,’ as a towering obstacle.

6. Raised up against the knowledge – When thoughts are continuously driven by our convictions that may be based on past experiences, or our education takes precedence against the clear and thorough understanding of God's Word, we must take them captive.

7. Raised up against the knowledge – We must aggressively address the thought processes we are using that violate the Word of God, because they can become demonic (James 3:13-18).

a) Such were the *high towers* of Judaic self-righteousness, philosophical speculations, and rhetorical sophistries, the “knowledge” so much prized by many (opposed to “the knowledge of God”), which endangered a section of the Corinthian Church.

8. Raised up against the knowledge – We must aggressively address these thoughts that rise up against God's Word because we have become possessive about what we think since past experiences or influential people may have reinforced them.

9. Taking every thought - Taking every way of thinking, every speech or philosophy, and displacing it with the knowledge, understanding, and practice of God's Word is critical to defeating the influences of the flesh. This is a weapon of the flesh that must be destroyed.

a) In 4:4, Paul says that the minds of unbelievers have been blinded by the gods of this world to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. <sup>[5]</sup>

b) In 11:3, he candidly says that satan has ensnared the Corinthians' “thoughts” in the same way he deceived Eve. Satan holds their minds hostage, and Paul is prepared to fight a pitched battle to liberate them. <sup>[6]</sup>

10. Captive – The subjugating of our thoughts to the obedience of Christ to gain complete control over it so that the believer is mentally focused to participate in the will of God completely.

11. Captive – We also ‘refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.’ (2 Timothy 2:22) If we don't, we can experience the influence of demons on our lives (2 Timothy 2:22-26).

12. Obedience of Christ - As His children, we must learn to listen with a mind to submit to His will and positively respond to doing what God says. (John 15:1-11) An obedience that is dominated by faith in Christ alone.

13. Obedience of Christ - Others take it to indicate the Christian's struggle to bring every purpose into harmony with Christ's will and ways so that He might be victorious through us.

## C. Gear up (v. 6):

1. Ready to punish – Paul moves from destroying strongholds, taking them captive to a more drastic military approach. A believer must continually commit to obey Christ because this empowers them (Romans 12:2; Hebrews 5:14) to experience the Holy Spirit's work in them, strengthening them to destroy strongholds and take thoughts and speculations captive.

a) The word "punish" (*ekdikēsai*) could more forcefully be translated as "avenge" (cf. 1 Cor. 3:17). In other contexts, it describes the wrath of God directed against the enemies of His people (Num. 31:2; Deut. 32:43; Rev. 19:2).<sup>[7]</sup>

2. Ready to punish – When a believer chooses to be a doer of the Word, they live by faith and not by sight (James 1:22-25; 2:14-26). The Lord rewards faith (Hebrews 11:6) and moves the mountains that are fortresses in a believer's mind.

a) His approach to this particular confrontation in Corinth was twofold. First, the Corinthian church needed to express their subjection to Christ by demonstrating loyalty to His representative Paul (5:20; cf. 7:15). In this way, their obedience would be complete. Second, when Paul was sure they had repudiated his opponents (cf. 6:14-18), he could then deal directly with the false apostles, knowing that the church supported him. He was ready to punish their acts of disobedience to Christ. The word "punish" (*ekdikēsai*) could more forcefully be translated "avenge" (cf. 1 Cor. 3:17). In other contexts, it describes the wrath of God directed against the enemies of His people (Num. 31:2; Deut. 32:43; Rev. 19:2).<sup>[8]</sup>

3. Disobedience – Paul is ready to destroy all refusals to hear God or to live with a careless attitude towards the Word of God (Luke 21:34; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Titus 3:8; Proverbs 13:13).

4. Obedience – Not disobeying God takes place when there is the fullest degree of commitment to willingly and actively submit oneself to the saving will of God as we live by faith and not by sight (Hebrews 11:6).

5. Complete – When our obedience has developed our spiritual life so that the flesh does not have the same kind of influence, we are then more influenced by the Spirit than the flesh (Ephesians 5:15-18). This means we now can totally respond in obedience to the Word, destroying, punishing, and imprisoning evil thoughts.

6. Complete – Once we live in the Spirit of God, the following takes place:

- a) The Word of God is brought back to our remembrance (John 14:26)
- b) The Spirit of God convicts when we sin (John 16:7-11).
- c) The Spirit illuminates the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:10-15).
- d) We are able to walk in “the light as He is in the light” so that we do not fulfill the lust of the flesh (1 John 1:5-7).
- e) We are empowered because God is at work in us, ‘both to will and to work for His good pleasure.’ (Phil. 2:13).
- f) When we pray, God answers our prayers (John 15:7-10).

7. Complete – To be complete in Christ should be the goal of all believers; “*We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.*” (Colossians 1:28-29; NASU)

8. Complete – To experience completeness in Christ is not perfection (1 John 1:8-9) it is more influenced by the Spirit than the flesh as explained in Romans 8:12-14.

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<sup>[1]</sup>Richards, L. O. (1991; Published in electronic form by Logos Research Systems, 1996). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (782). Wheaton: Victor Books.

<sup>[2]</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 665). Victor Books.

<sup>[3]</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 665). Victor Books.

[NIV New International Version](#)

[NRSV New Revised Standard Version](#)

[TEV Today's English](#) Version

[NASB New American Standard Bible](#)

rhetorical \***Rhetoric**. The art or study of proper forms and methods of public speaking, highly emphasized in antiquity. Although only the well-to-do had much training in it, the rhetorical forms and ideas they used filtered down to the rest of urban society through public speeches, in a manner similar to that in which television permeates modern Western society.

<sup>[4]</sup> Barnes, A. (1884–1885). [\*Notes on the New Testament: II Corinthians & Galatians\*](#) (R. Frew, Ed.; pp. 208–209). Blackie & Son.

<sup>[5]</sup> Garland, D. E. (1999). [\*2 Corinthians\*](#) (Vol. 29, p. 437). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[6]</sup> Garland, D. E. (1999). [\*2 Corinthians\*](#) (Vol. 29, p. 437). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>[7]</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:576). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>[8]</sup> Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (2:576). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.