

## 2 CORINTHIANS, PART III

### STUDY NUMBER EIGHTEEN – 2 Cor. 10:1-6

#### TEXT:

- v. 1 Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ – I who am lowly when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!
- v. 2 I am asking that when I am present I need not show boldness with the confidence with which I am proposing to be courageous against some, who are considering us as walking according to the flesh.
- v. 3 For, though we are walking in the flesh, we are not warring according to the flesh.
- v. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses,
- v. 5 destroying reasonings and every lofty thing offering resistance against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
- v. 6 And being in readiness to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

#### INTRODUCTION:

## **The Church Gossip**

Mildred, the church gossip, a self-appointed monitor of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's silence. She made a mistake, however, when she accused George, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his old pickup parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon. She emphatically told George and several others that everyone seeing it there would know what he was doing. George, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just turned and walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny. He said nothing.

Later that evening, George quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house...walked home...and left it there all night.

Don't ya just love ol' George.....

## **Lost in Translation**

A Texas Cowboy and his wife were bickering while vacationing in France. They were still hardly speaking to each other after being seated in a fancy French restaurant for dinner. When the waiter arrived the cowboy said: "I'll have a big, thick porterhouse steak." The waiter replied: "Monsieur...what about ze mad cow?" To which the cowboy replied, "She'll have a salad."

(Closer Walk: 365 Daily Devotionals that Nurture a Heart for God by Bruce H. Wilkinson) Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. Copyright – Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, 1992

Giving	409-06	Peter Marshall said it well: "Help us to give according to our incomes, lest Thou, O God, make our incomes according to our gifts." p. 94
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(No More Mr. Nice Guy by Stephen Brown)

Jake Fen, a Hungarian, had a funny sense of humor. One time he came on the novel idea that he could end his wife's incessant nagging by letting her know how she would feel if he committed suicide. So Mr. Fen built an elaborate harness to make it appear as though he had hanged himself. His unsuspecting wife came in from shopping, saw her husband hanging from the rafter, let out a scream, and promptly fainted.

A neighbor, hearing the scream, came over. Finding what she logically assumed were two corpses, she took the opportunity to loot the apartment. As the neighbor was leaving, her arms laden with loot, the outraged, very alive and hanging Mr. Fen kicked

her stoutly in the backside. The neighbor, knowing that dead folks don't kick that hard, promptly died of a heart attack. Mr. Fen was acquitted of manslaughter, and at last report Mrs. Fen was trying to forgive him.

p. 130

(Forgive & Forget by Lewis B. Smedes)

Are you capable of forgiving...God...when he has let you down and disappointed you by permitting bad luck and sickness and cruelty in His world and permitting some of these things to happen to you?

You may react automatically: God cannot be blamed for anything, so he cannot be forgiven for anything. The Psalms say, "The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings." Being God is never having to say you are sorry.

When it comes to God, our instinctive piety rushes to defend him against our own complaints.

Maybe so. But we should not smother the primal screams of those who feel as if God has left them dangling in the winds of pain. Would it bother God too much if we found our peace by forgiving him for the wrongs we suffer? What if we found a way to forgive him without blaming him? A special sort of forgiving for a special sort of relationship. Would he mind?

pp. 82-83

(Quality Friendship: The Risks and Rewards by Gary Inrig)

It has been my experience in counseling that a vast majority of people struggle with the fundamental problem of self-worth. As one woman put it when I asked her how she saw herself, "I see myself as fat and frumpy, and as just not a very nice kind of person." I did not see her that way – she was an attractive woman. And obviously her fiancé did not, either. But because she saw herself in those terms and believed others did as well, she was struggling with her relationships. The old adage is true: "We are not what we think we are; We are not what others think we are; We are what we think others think we are."

Until we can resolve that fundamental issue of self-worth, we will be crippled for effective relationships.

p. 40

(The Trauma of Transparency by J. Grant Howard)

God is a personal being with the capacity to communicate. He created man in His image. Man, therefore, is a personal being with the same capacity to communicate. Like his Creator he can think, feel and decide. These elements of personality are what Dwight Small calls, "relational bridges" through which an intimate union with God is possible. Nothing else in God's creation, even though it be alive, has this kind of personhood. Only man is a person and can engage in the communication process with his Creator.

That man was created to have this personal, intimate relationship with God is never really explicitly stated in Genesis 1 and 2. It is assumed. But what is assumed in the creation account is explicitly revealed elsewhere. Man's problem is sin and sin alienates him from God. Alienation presupposes a prior relationship. The solution is reconciliation. Reconciliation allows for the original relationship to be restored. In Christ, man once again enters into a peaceful friendship with God.

In Genesis 1 and 2 that peaceful friendship existed and thus God and man could and did have open, honest and appropriate communication with each other. Here we see the Father and His son before the son becomes a prodigal. We don't have the full transcript of what they said. There are a lot of divinely ordained "gaps" in the Eden tapes! But let us briefly analyze what is recorded.

pp. 15-16

Adam and Eve sinned. An immediate, automatic reaction was to begin to withdraw from one another. Sin caused a breakdown in their communication with each other. Sinners tend to hide from each other.

3:8 "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

It was time for His normal daily interaction with them. In the past they would have eagerly greeted Him. Now things were different. They react to Him just as they reacted to each other. They look for a hiding place. They no longer feel comfortable in open fellowship with Him. They don't want to communicate with Him. Guilty people never feel totally at ease with their accuser. The one who is unclean doesn't feel comfortable in the presence of Him who is spotless. When confrontation with you Creator (or any other significant person) appears to be forthcoming, the natural reaction of the sinner is to hide. Separation has occurred between God and man. The Creator and His other. They are out of fellowship. Sinful man seeks to hide from a holy God.

pp. 28-29

The average typical human being uses God as a crutch for moments of crisis, a catharsis for moments of confession, and a counselor for moments of confusion. The rest of the time he is relatively respectable theist who conveniently sidesteps the whole issue.

pp. 32-33

When someone has wounded us with words, our natural tendency is to fire a semantic salvo right back at them. The response of a wounded ego is retaliation. Get even. The quickest way to accomplish this is with words aimed directly at our adversary's ego.

Once we get even --- we get out of range. It is no fun to get hurt. To avoid it we withdraw to a safe place where the other person can't hit us and hurt us. We gradually retreat away and hide from any kind of meaningful relationship with the person. We retreat by not talking at all; and finally by going our separate ways. Couples can live in

the same house and deacons can serve on the same board yet be involved in one of the first two phases of withdrawal.

But Christians, regardless of how sensitive and sore we may be from previous word battles, are obligated to continue speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15, 25); to work at being of one mind on issues (Philippians 2:2); and to develop a forbearing spirit (Ephesians 4:2). That last concept --- forbearing --- is an instructive one. It means to tolerate or to put up with. The Lord used it when He talked about having to “put up with” the unbelief of Israel (Mark 9:19).

pp. 58-59

In our last study together the apostle Paul finished his discourse on giving. This subject has been translated in chapters 8 & 9. He basically is challenging the Corinthians saints to get together an offering for the relief of the saints in Jerusalem who were having a very difficult time. This project was successfully carried out.

Now you can almost feel that the apostle is taking the pen in his own hand and writing the rest of the letter.

He has taken care of the giving problem, and now he wants to deal head-on with the personal problem between himself and some of the Corinthians who are criticizing and condemning his ministry.

Much of our time and emotional energy is spent dealing with the struggle of interpersonal relationships. Here in chapter 10 we see the apostle Paul getting into the arena and hammering out some of these problems that could affect the fruitfulness of ministry in Corinth if they were not handled.

v. 1     Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ – I who am lowly when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!

The little word “I” occurs six times in these first two verses. It would give us an indication that the apostle has taken the pen in hand personally and has begun to write.

It would also give us an indication that the apostle is separating himself from the rest of the team who have had ministry in Corinth as he deals with this situation:

“Now I, Paul, myself”

“NOW I, PAUL, MYSELF URGE YOU”

He doesn’t command them; he simply makes an urgent appeal to them about what needs to be done in this situation.

“NOW I, PAUL, MYSELF URGE YOU BY THE MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST”

Right here in this first verse we have a great illustration of the change that begins to take place as Christlikeness is forged out in our persons.

Paul by nature is not like this.

We see him in his unconverted days going for blood in the death of Stephen, and who knows how many other Christians experienced great loss and severe personal damage because of the rampaging anger of the apostle.

#### Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.

The result of the Spirit's work in his life is that the apostle is urging them by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

These characteristics of Christ are a fruitage of the Spirit.

#### Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

(Blessings Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

In this way our Lord calls His disciples to a new principle of life altogether. What a strange kind of battle it was, and as He spoke to them about it, there seems to me to be one thing that stands out perfectly clearly: they were to win the battle by apparent defeat. By crucifixion they were going to be crowned. By refusing to counterattack they were to find the way of victory. By apparent failure they were going to conquer; and by allowing themselves to be identified with His cross, they were going to find the way of triumph. The paradoxes of the Christian life! Thus the Christian faith had, in its birth, a new principle at the very heart of it – the principle of sacrifice, the principle of love, the principle of non-retaliation, the principle that was to lead to absolute victory.  
pp. 174-75

(Iceman by Ron Rearick with Doug Murren)

When it came to prayer time and requests were taken, one of the guys was concerned that the Mormons were really influencing some of his family members. He asked that we pray that the young people wouldn't be taken in by what the Mormons say.

I'd never really given much thought to the Mormons around Salt Lake City, but when we began to discuss some books saying they were a cult, I knew what that meant. I listened as they talked. It seemed they were really irritated about the Mormons. At a quiet point in the meeting, I raised my hand and offered a solution.

“Hey, I know how to handle those dudes. I’ve got some guys who are into powder. The way I see it, if we take out their temple, we’ll discourage them enough they’ll probably want to leave Salt Lake – you know, something like Jericho.”

Their jaws all dropped open. There was dead silence. Right then, I knew I’d said something wrong, but I didn’t rightly know what. After all, my plan seemed to make a lot more sense than any they’d talked about. The moderator broke in at that point. “Yeah, Ron, right. We’ll give that some consideration.”  
pp. 153-54

Someone started tugging at my shoulder urgently. “Hey, Ice, stop it! You’re going to kill him! Man, you’re going to kill him!”

He didn’t really have to pull me away, because, for several seconds, I had already been aware of what I was doing. It was as though I’d been lifted out of my body and was looking down at the fight. It was just long enough to let me see the ugliness of my temper. I stopped, picked the poor guy up and began to cry. “Hey, Man, forgive me! I’m sorry, Man! I’m really sorry!”

The guy did forgive me. The others guys couldn’t believe it – Ice was crying. I was shocked too. I’d never said I’m sorry to anybody in my life. It looked like the Lord and I had another battle to work out. My anger had to go.

I’d never heard the word repentance before, but I did understand the warm feeling I had when I asked the dude to forgive me. It was such a nice, warm feeling, but hard to explain. I’d always been so afraid of the words forgive me. The astonished looks on the faces of my co-workers seemed to matter to me, all of a sudden. I knew a couple of them now thought I was a sissy. Even I thought I might be cracking up. What bothered me was the other guys probably figured I was really afraid of going back to the joint. I knew it was more than that.

p. 150

“NOW I, PAUL, MYSELF URGE YOU BE THE MEEKNESS AND GENTLENESS OF CHRIST”

MEEKNESS points to that INWARD disposition and  
GENTLENESS to the OUTWARD manifestation of it.

(Acceptance: Loosing the Webs of Personal Insecurity by Don Baker)

I read a sign on a billboard the other day that said, “Meekness is weakness.” Modern society views meekness as a lack of aggressiveness, or assertiveness, and rejects it with contempt.

True meekness, however, is not weakness. It is an inner strength that responds positively to all the happenings of life.

Meekness is a grace of soul that produces acceptable responses to even unacceptable circumstances.

Meekness is the spirit’s positive response to negative experiences.

As lowliness bows its mind to the truth of God, meekness bows its will to the dealings of God.

It is the gentle, mild, undisputing, unabrasive response to whatever God allows to take place in my life.

Meekness says:

I ACCEPT ALL OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ME WITHOUT  
RESISTANCE OR BITTERNESS.

p. 80

(the Disciplines of Life by V. Raymond Edman)

Do we have the gentleness to heed the counsel of another, to take graciously the word of rebuke about our own course of action or the suggestion that our spirit may not be right, that we have not been guided of God in this detail? David could say, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head" (Ps. 141:5).

Gentleness of spirit toward those who are close to us, gentleness toward those that wrongfully abuse us or are our enemies, gentleness toward the Spirit of God, through whatever means He may speak to us, this is the discipline of domination. Uprightness of character and tenderness of heart are imperative prerequisites for those upon whom develops the leadership of others. Among his last words David included that truth, saying, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain" (II Sam. 23:3, 4).

We remember again David's statement that whatever success had come to him was because "Thy gentleness hath made me great." It was not his native tenderness, personality, nor ability; rather it was God, whose Spirit in his life was manifested by gentleness, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness" (Gal. 5:22).

It is the gentleness of the indwelling Saviour, the tender, compassionate Jesus, shown forth to others by His Spirit of grace. Gentle to our own, to our enemies, and especially to God, this gentleness that maketh great.  
pp. 226-27

Plummer paraphrases this first part of verse 1:

Now this is an intensely personal matter. I, Paul, in all earnestness appeal to you by the meekness and unfailing fairness of Christ.

The rest of the verse reads:

"I WHO AM LOWLY WHEN FACE TO FACE WITH YOU, BUT BOLD  
TOWARD YOU WHEN ABSENT!"

Their criticisms of the apostle had involved one thing that he hits right here head-on, and that is, they say that he is manifesting this meekness and gentleness of Christ when face



to face with them. He is lowly because of the work of Christ in his life, but in contrast, he is bold toward them when absent.

The contrast here in the passage is between LOWLY and BOLD.

What they are criticizing the apostle about is that he can talk a great game in private but can't handle personal confrontation.

In The Living Bible we read:

“Paul’s letters are bold enough when he is far away, but when he gets here he will be afraid to raise his voice!”

- v. 2 I am asking that when I am present I need not show boldness with the confidence with which I am proposing to be courageous against some, who are considering us as walking according to the flesh.

Whereas in verse 1 the apostle is URGING them, now in verse 2 he is ASKING. He is asking that when he is present, he need not “show the boldness with the confidence with which I am proposing to be courageous against some.”

Boldness is a manifestation of the Spirit-filled life.

Acts 4:31

And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

The apostle is saying here that the opposers are going to hear from him.

There are several in Corinth who, we learned about in the first couple of chapters, have criticized the apostle for changing his itinerary and criticizing the content of his message, which is a message of God’s grace granted to those who will receive Jesus Christ by faith.

Phillips translates this first part of the second verse b saying:

(I) am begging you to make it unnecessary for me to be outspoken and stern in your presence.

The Living Bible paraphrases it:

I hope I won’t need to show you when I come how harsh and rough I can be.

Plummer translates it:

I pray you not to drive me, when I do come to you, to be fearlessly outspoken with the sure confidence with which I am persuaded that I can muster courage against certain persons.

(The (Be) Happy Attitudes by Robert Schuller)

Of course, there are many different ways to solve conflict. I like the story of Helga and Henry, a Swedish couple. They were married for sixty years, and they fought like cats and dogs every day of they married lives. Finally, their sixtieth anniversary arrived. Helga and Henry began the morning with a terrible spat. They argued all day long.

At the end of the day, Helga said to her husband, "Henry, tonight I think ven v pray, ve better pray for Henry. May the Lord give us peace. So tonight, I tink I'll pray that the Lord vill take you home and I'll go live with my sister, Olga."

p. 170

(A New Design for Family Ministry by Dr. Dennis B. Guernsey)

To become disengaged is to become an unplugged kind of person, one who handles the problems of relationships by walking away from them. It is the position of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He thought that he could solve whatever problems he had at home by running away from them and from the relationship with his father. But when he got to the far country he found that his problems had increased and that his father was psychologically still with him. In the midst of his struggle, he had a conversation with his father in his head. What an irony. He had run away, putting miles of distance between himself and his father, only to find that his father was right there with him. To unplug and disengage rarely solves any problem. It usually makes things worse.

p. 46

**"I AM ASKING THAT WHEN I AM PRESENT I NEED NOT SHOW BOLDNESS WITH THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH I AM PROPOSING TO BE COURAGEOUS AGAINST SOME,"**

What are these opposers doing that causes the apostle to have to become bold when he is there? It is given in the last phrase of verse 2:

**"WHO ARE CONSIDERING US AS WALKING ACCORDING TO THE FLESH"**

They are considering us, and this involves three things:

1. EVALUATING
2. CRITICIZING
3. CONDEMNING

The summation of all of their examination of the apostle Paul and his ministry is that he is “walking according to the flesh.”

Plummer says:

(They) are persuaded that we think and act on worldly and carnal principles.

Phillips puts it:

(They are) reckoning that our activities are on the purely human level.

The Living Bible paraphrase it:

who seem to think my deeds and words are merely those of an ordinary man.

v. 3 For, though we are walking in the flesh, we are not warring according to the flesh.

The apostle's response in verse 3 is a great evidence that he is not walking in the flesh.

In this verse he states the reason for why he is going to handle this situation in the way he is.

Paul is not defensive here. He uses the word “THOUGH” which means he is making a concession at this point.

“FOR THOUGH WE ARE WALKING IN THE FLESH”

Galatians 5:16, 17

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

One of the key ways you can tell that you have stirred up the flesh is by being defensive in a denial stance of the criticism.

Romans 7:18-24

For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law I the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making

me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> verse we have a positive and negative statement:

“For though we are (positively) walking in the flesh, we are (negatively) not warring according to the flesh.

Phillips translates this verse:

The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level.

In The Living Bible we read:

It is true that I am an ordinary, weak human being, but I don't use human plans and methods to win my battles.

Paul characterizes the Christian life as:

**WALKING AND WARRING**

Ephesians 6:10-17

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world-forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2 Tim. 2:3, 4

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

Paul knew that he was coming against attitudes and factions in Corinth that would be very difficult to handle. And so he begins by clearing the air as to what a believer is to do when he is facing something impossible for mere flesh to handle.

### Equipment Check

First of all he tells us to take a good look at our equipment. What equipment? Our intellectual reserves, our emotional make-up? No. Our real equipment. "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world." So we take inventory of our spiritual arsenal. Ephesians 6:10-18 has a lot to say about that, as does Revelation 12:11. (This inventory we should know by heart!)

And don't forget that most unusual weapon King Jehoshaphat placed in front of his army in 2 Chronicles 20:21-22.

"Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the Lord and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying:

'Give thanks to the Lord,  
for his love endures forever.'

As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated."

(2 Chronicles 20:21-22)

It was probably the first time in history a choir had marched before the army as first-line warriors. Strange indeed that an essential part of the equipment to lead us into God's joyous victory is praise. It's something to think about.

Finally, the simple declaration of the name of Jesus is divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. (See Acts 3:6) in view of the repeated emphasis Jesus had placed on praying and acting "in his name.")

No, it is not as though God asks a Christian to reject his mind when facing a difficult situation. Quite the opposite. God simply asks us to join our minds with His – to think His thoughts. Of course in the flesh this would be impossible, but because they are His thoughts and we are "in the Spirit" and "praying in the Spirit," we can and we must.

pp. 226-27

(The Faith of the American Soldier by Stephen Mansfield) New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher / Penguin Group (USA) Inc. Copyright – Stephen Mansfield, 2005.

Wartime Faith 636-09

Of another meeting one minister wrote, "Men who never shrank in battle from any responsibility came forward weeping. Such is the power of the Gospel of Christ when preached in its purity." Dozens of similar meetings were held with thousands of lives changed.

Some even felt the call to the ministry themselves, for as one chaplain wrote, “Strange as it may seem to many...the call to preach the gospel of Christ came to the hearts of the men of war on the tented field; and no sooner were their carnal weapons laid aside than they buckled on the Divine armor, and, seizing the sword of the Spirit entered the battle against the power of darkness.”  
p. 91

Wartime Faith 636-10

There is Jodi Rund, for example. Corporal Rund is blond, fresh faced, and not hard to imagine as a campus head-turner. Not long ago, she was a sociology major at the University of Illinois. She was called upon when she had only one semester left and now finds herself in the thick of the Iraq war. And she is a good soldier. One of her colleagues described her as “Osama bin Laden’s worst nightmare: a pretty woman who prays to Jesus and fights as well as any man.”  
pp. 102-3

(Blessings Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

What is the nature of this Christian battle? Paul spoke of it to the church of Ephesus in these words, “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” (Ephesians 6:12). The conflict into which the Christian is introduced is first a spiritual one, and in its essence it is one which stems from our minds and from our thought-life. So the child of God, responding to the call of Jesus Christ, and duly warned by Him that he is entering into a battle, finds himself in a warfare, the nature of which is spiritual and the source of which is in his thought-life. Paul describes the problem of carnality in the church as that which stems from corruption in the mind and which results in captivity of the soul.  
p. 175

v. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses,

The reason here stated in verse 4 that they are not warring according to the flesh is now stated:

“FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE”

(31 Days of Power: Learning to Live in Spiritual Victory by Ruth Myers with Warren Myers) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ruth Myers, 2003

Warfare 531-15

*We rest on Thee, our Shield and our Defender!  
Thine is the battle, Thine shall be the praise;  
When passing through the gates of pearly splendor.  
Victors, we rest with Thee, through endless days.*

Satan's strategy and tactics flow from his character. Jesus has told us that Satan "was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Above all else, he is a murderer and a liar, the sworn enemy of both life and truth. In his murderous and destructive intent, he uses lies as his foremost weapon – lies that are deadly. With those lies he wants to receive and devour us – to destroy our vitality and usefulness.

p. 144

Warfare 531-16

Therefore in seeking to defeat Satan and his strategies, let's be obsessed with the glory of God. Surely this is the best, the most pointed rebuff we can give the enemy, for it is directly opposed to what he longs for. "Whatever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the father" (Colossians 3:17). Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

p. 149

These weapons are outlined in Ephesians chapter 6 as:

THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

SHOES THAT ARE THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

THE HELMET OF SALVATION

THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, which is the Word of God

Once again we have a negative and a positive in this verse:

"The weapons of our warfare are (negatively) not of the flesh, but" (in contrast positively) they are "divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses,"

In these 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> verses the apostle is going to give us three functions of these divinely powerful weapons of warfare:

1. THE DESTRUCTION OF FORTRESSES
2. THE DESTROYING OF REASONINGS
3. THE DESTROYING OF EVERY LOFTY THING OFFERING RESISTANCE AGAINST THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

In The Living Bible we read:

I use God's mighty weapons, not those made by men, to knock down the devil's stronghold.

Plummer translates it:

for the demolition of the stronghold which defy His Gospel;

“FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT OF THE FLESH, BUT DIVINELY POWERFUL”

Here is the key for any ministry, and the effectiveness and fruitfulness of that ministry will be dependent upon the use of these divinely powerful weapons.

Isaiah 40:31

but those who hope in the Lord  
will renew their strength  
They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint.

Zechariah 4:6

‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Colossians 1:11

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience, joyously

2 Tim. 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

(Blessings Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)



Paul's concern for the church at Corinth (as it would indeed be for us) is simply that the imagination of the mind, the process of thinking, the way of reasoning, the method of logic, the understanding of things which a man adopted in his unconverted days, become projected into the fellowship of the church, and the church begins to fail in its spiritual battle because it adopts carnal procedures. Alas, there is so much carnality in the church, but Paul says, "...the weapons of our warfare are not carnal...."

p. 176

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

Though Paul first had in mind the reasonings of those in Corinth who were opposed to his apostolic message, the principle certainly is the same when one reckons with his own reasonings which for all practical purposes leave God out of the picture. And certainly the solution is the same.

p. 223

**"FOR THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE ARE NOT OF THE FLESH, BUT DIVINELY POWERFUL FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF FORTRESSES,"**

The first purpose of the divinely powerful weapons is given in the last phrase in verse 4:

1. **"FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF FORTRESSES"**

In the battle for men's souls you are going to find that oftentimes defensive fortresses are erected in which they can feel secure.

What are some of the FORTRESSES that we face? A few of them are:

1. EVOLUTION
2. AGNOSTICISM

(The Rebirth of America by the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation)

To settle for evolution or "the big bang" theory without God begs a thousand scientific questions. Where did the original energy and matter come from? What caused the explosion? How could impersonal forces acting randomly construct a universe whose planets rotate with such precision that we set our clocks by them? It is preposterous to believe that "nothing times nobody equals everything!"

President Ronald Reagan, at the prayer breakfast, shared that one of his great desires would be to bring a large group of atheists together, serve them a very delicious gourmet meal and then ask them at the conclusion of it if they believed in a cook.

I love the way Harry Ironside handled the typical agnostic:

(Ordained of the Lord: A Biography of H.A. Ironside by E. Schuyler English)

“Therefore,” he continued, “I’ll be glad to agree to this debate on the following conditions, namely that in order to prove that this gentleman has something worth debating about, he will promise to bring with him to the hall next Sunday two people whose qualifications I shall give in a moment, as proof that agnosticism is of real value in changing human lives and building true character. First, he must promise to bring with him one man who was for years what we commonly call a ‘down-and-outer.’ I’m not particular as to the exact nature of the sins that wrecked his life and made him an outcast from society – whether he was a drunkard, or a criminal of some kind, or a victim of a sensual appetite. He must be, however, a man who for years was under the power of some evil habits from which he could not deliver himself, but who, on some occasion, attended one of this gentleman’s meetings and heard him speak, glorifying agnosticism and denouncing the Bible and Christianity, and whose heart and mind as he listened to such an address were so deeply stirred that he went away from that meeting saying, ‘Henceforth I, too, am an agnostic!’ or words to that effect, and as a result of embracing that particular philosophy he found that a new power had come into his life. The sins that he once loved, now he hates, and righteousness and goodness are henceforth the ideals of his life. He is now an entirely new man, a credit to himself and an asset to society – all because he is an agnostic.

“Secondly,” Ironside went on to say, “I would like this gentleman who has challenged me to debate to bring with him to the hall next Sunday one woman – and I think he may have more difficulty in finding the woman than the man – who was once a poor, wretched, characterless outcast, the slave of degrading passions and the victim of man’s corrupt living. Perhaps,” said Harry, nodding in the direction of San Francisco’s infamous Barbary Coast, which was only a stone’s throw from the spot where he was speaking, “perhaps one who had lived for years in some notorious resort down there on Pacific Street, or in some other hell-hole, utterly lost, ruined, and wretched. But this woman also entered one of this gentleman’s meetings and heard him loudly proclaiming his agnosticism and ridiculing the message of the Holy Scriptures. As she listened to him, hope was born in her heart and she said, ‘This is just what I need to deliver me from the slavery of sin!’ She followed this teaching, then, until she became an intelligent agnostic or infidel. As a result, her whole being revolted against the degradation of the life she had been living. She fled from the infamous place where she had been captive so long and today, rehabilitated, she has won her way back to an honored position in society and is living a clean, virtuous, happy life – all because she is an agnostic.

“Now, sir,” Harry continued, “if you will promise to bring with you two such people as examples of what agnosticism will do, I will promise to meet you at the Academy of Science Hall at the hour appointed next Sunday, and I’ll bring with me at the very least one hundred men and women who for years lived in just such sinful degradation as I have tried to depict but who have been gloriously saved through believing the message of the gospel which you ridicule. I’ll have these men and women with me on the platform as witnesses to the miraculous saving power of Jesus Christ, and as present-day proof of the truth of the Bible.”

Quickly turning to the Salvation Army captain, Ironside asked, “Captain, have you any who could go with me to such a meeting?”

“We can give you forty, at least,” she exclaimed enthusiastically, “all from this one corps, and we’ll furnish a brass band to lead the procession.”

“Fine!” Harry said, “Now, sir,” facing his challenger, “I shall have no difficulty in picking up at least sixty others from various missions, gospel halls, and evangelical churches. So if you promise faithfully to bring two such exhibits as I have describe, I will come marching in at the head of such a procession, with the band playing Onward Christian Soldiers, and I’ll be ready for the debate.”

His opponent, who had at least some sense of humor, smiled rather sardonically and, with a wave of a hand as if to say, “Nothing doing!” walked away from the scene of the meeting – while the crowd applauded and cheered the street preacher who had met the challenge of the agnostic and put him to flight.  
pp. 99-101

- v. 5     destroying reasonings and every lofty thing offering resistance against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Whereas back in verse 4 we saw the divinely powerful weapons of warfare being used for the destruction of fortresses, now in verse 5 we see the second function:

### 3. DESTROYING REASONINGS

Here we get into the realm of apologetics and the destruction or arguments that are opposed to credibility of Christ and the authority of Scripture.

(The Holiness of God by R.C. Sproul)

Here is where I got an Excedrin headache in my philosophy class. Before the world began there was nothing. But what in the world is “nothing”? Have you ever tried to think about nothing? Where can we find it? Obviously nowhere. Why? Because it is nothing and nothing doesn’t exist. It can’t exist, because if it did then it would be something and not nothing. Are you starting to get a headache like mine? Think about it for a second. Nuts! I can’t tell you to think about “it” because nothing isn’t an “it.” I can only say “nothing isn’t.”

The act of creation was the first event in history. It was also the most dazzling. The Supreme Architect gazed at His complex blueprint and shouted commands for the boundaries of the world to be set. He spoke, and the seas were shut behind doors and the clouds were filled with dew. He bound the Pleiades and buckled the belt of Orion. He spoke again and the earth began to fill with orchards in full bloom. Blossoms burst forth like springtime in Mississippi. The lavender hues of plum trees danced with the brilliance of azaleas and forsythia.

God spoke once more, and the waters teemed with living things. The snail sneaked beneath the shadowy form of the stingray while the great marlin broke the surface of the water to promenade on the waves with his tail. Again He spoke, and the roar of the lion was heard and the bleating of sheep. Four-footed animals, eight-legged spiders, and winged insects appeared.

And God said, “that’s good.”

Then God stooped to earth and carefully fashioned a piece of clay. He lifted it gently to His lips and breathed into it.. The clay began to move. It began to think. It began to feel. It began to worship. It was alive and stamped with the image of its Creator.

Consider the raising of Lazarus from the dead. How did Jesus do it? He did not enter the tomb where the rotting corpse of Lazarus was laid out; he did not have to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. He stood outside the tomb, at a distance, and cried with a loud voice. "Lazarus, come forth!" Blood began to flow through the veins of Lazarus and brain waves started to pulsate. In a burst of life Lazarus quit his grave and walked out. That is fiat creation, the power of divine imperative.

We have found thus far in Paul's argument that the weapons of his warfare are divinely powerful for:

1. the destruction of fortresses
2. the destroying of reasonings
3. AND NOW: for the destroying of every lofty thing offering resistance against the knowledge of God.

Here we are talking about PRIDE. We ask ourselves:

What are some of these lofty things that offer resistance and are a manifestation of pride?

They are three in number:

1. NO HELP
2. NO NEED
3. NO FUTURE

They rear their ugly heads and form a resistance against the knowledge of God.

(31 Days of Power: Learning to Live in Spiritual Victory by Ruth Myers with Warren Myers) Sisters, OR: Multnomah. Copyright – Ruth Myers, 2003

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On the whole, our warfare is focused on glorious, positive goals. It means fulfilling God's longings to call out a people for Himself, a vast family of children who will be conformed to the image of His Son. It means fulfilling His desire for an army of soldiers whose main task is to make known, by life and by word, the good news of the reconciled life, the transformed life, and the conquering life.

Our being involved in fulfilling these longings of God's heart automatically defeats Satan and his purposes. Whatever we do that glorifies the Lord helps defeat Satan.

Philippians 3:7,8

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ,

Plummer translates this 5<sup>th</sup> verse:

Seeing that we demolish confident persuasions and every high structure that is being lifted up to oppose the revelation which God has given of Himself,

In The Living Bible we read:

These weapons can break down every proud argument against God and every wall that can be built to keep men from finding him.

Phillips says:

Our battle is to bring down every deceptive fantasy and every imposing defense that men erect against the true knowledge of God.

On the battlefield we are warring with weapons of warfare that are divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses, the destroying of reasonings, and the destruction of every lofty thing offering resistance against the knowledge of God.

Once the battle is over and we are victorious, the apostle continues:

**“AND WE ARE TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.”**

It is MARTIN LUTHER, standing, saying:

“Unless you prove to me by Scripture and reason that I am mistaken, I cannot and will not recant. My conscience is captive to the word of God. To go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand. There is nothing else I can do. God help me. Amen.”

**“AND WE ARE TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE”**

Phillips translates it:

We even fight to capture every thought until it acknowledges the authority of Christ.

### 2 Cor. 2:11

In order that no advantage may be gained over us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

We are in a great spiritual battle for the minds of men.

Much of what is going on in the world today has to do with mind control. What the apostle is teaching us is spiritual mind control, if you please.

### Romans 8:5-8

For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace; because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

### Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

### Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

### 1 Peter 1:13

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

### 2 Cor. 3:14

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil is remaining unlifted, because it is being removed in Christ.

### 2 Cor. 4:4

In whose case the god of this world blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Cor. 11:3

But I am fearing, lest by any means, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 10:16

“This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them,”

1 Chron. 28:9

“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the Lord searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

Isaiah 26:3

You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast because he trusts in you.

Romans 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Ephesians 4:23

and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Matt. 12:43-45

“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came;’ and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes, and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than

itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

In Our Daily Bread for Monday, January 27, we read the following:

The church I pastored was located just a block from a major highway that carried traffic from the East Coast to the Gulf of Mexico. Because it was so near that road, we had our share of travelers who sought assistance. Some had a legitimate need, and we helped them as best we could. Many people, though, were out to “get what they could” from us. One regular plea was a faked emergency that could be remedied only with money. We had to learn that when someone was trying to take advantage of us, we should get them back on the road and not give in to their requests. These untrustworthy characters were playing a game I call “hit and run.”

This same sort of thing can happen in the thought-life of the Christian. Illegitimate thoughts often “stop by” to rob us of our purity. Reginald Thomas has said, “We owe it to ourselves to keep the traffic of evil thoughts on the move. We are not responsible for the thoughts that come; it is not sin to be tempted. But we are responsible for the thoughts that come; it is not sin to be tempted. But we are responsible for the reception that awaits them and we can never be too inhospitable.”

To invite these sinful thoughts to stay in our minds for a while is to invite defeat. Therefore, we must fill the residence of our minds with thoughts put there by the Holy Spirit. Then, because there is no space available, we can reject those unwelcome visitors by closing the door of our mind to them. With the Lord’s help, we can send bad thoughts on their way.

--P.R.V.

Lord, saturate my thoughts with truth,  
And let Your Word in me abide;  
Thus thinking on the pure and good,  
May my whole life be edified!

--H.G.B.

Nothing harms Christian character more than entertaining evil and impure thoughts.

(Blessing Out of Buffetings by Alan Redpath)

To illustrate this, turn to Simon Peter and the incident in which the Lord Jesus began to show to him this principle of the cross (Matthew 16:21-23). Christ spoke to him about the cross, about the blood, about the way of sacrifice and death. He had spoken earlier about the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, and if it die, it brings forth much fruit, but if it did not die it would abide alone; and Peter’s answer was, “Not so, Lord, not that way, not the way of the cross and death!”

Christ’s reply was shattering: “...Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”



But Peter did not learn his lesson. In the Garden of Gethsemane up goes his sword, out goes his arm, and off goes the man's ear. He is still resisting the principle of the cross, still following the procedure of carnality, and taking the line of resistance instead of the line of meekness and submission. He did not learn his lesson until after Pentecost (and it took him some time then), but this is the lesson which Paul is bringing to bear upon the church at Corinth.

You find this principle today in the church in terms of the theological outlook upon the Bible, though I have no wish to get involved in a controversial issue. The difference between what we call today the fundamentalist or the conservative evangelical and all others in their approach to the Book is that we as conservative evangelicals submit ourselves to the criticism of the Word of God, whereas all others submit the Book to their own criticism. This is the basic difference of approach to the whole subject of theology, so much so that in some circles it is said that if you are orthodox you are out-of-date; you are an obscurantist, and it is an impossible position to hold in the light of modern theology and modern science.

These are some of the high things that Paul said exalt themselves against the knowledge of God, and because the evangelical conservative holds to a position authority of Scripture, and refuses to move from that position, while he is only too glad to discuss and consider all enlightenment upon the Book, he is therefore called out-of-date.

Now this I believe is the form of carnality in the church which stems from corruption of the mind; not necessarily moral corruption, but the mind which insists in submitting the Word of God to its own criticism and only accepting that which the human intellect can understand and believe. This corruption of mind leads to carnality in the church and to captivity of spirit, for by that means there is that which exalts itself against the knowledge of God. That, in the theological area, is exactly the modern counterpart of our verse.  
pp. 176-77

(Blessing Out of Buffeting by Alan Redpath)

To be specific, it works something like this. Somebody says an unkind word about you, or you are accused falsely of something you have not done, or somebody is spiteful in his comments and critical in his attitude. You begin to think about it, you repeat it to yourself over and over again with increased indignation, and because it begins to fill your mind, you tell your friends (with additions of course) until at last, by frequent repetition, you have been insulted twenty times instead of one. You have determined to counterattack, to retaliate, to answer back, to vindicate yourself, and to prove that they are wrong and you are right. This is the carnality in the life which has happened because of corruption in the mind, because in the thought-life you have been defeated before you have to counterattack.  
p.180

(Make Anger Your Ally by Nail Clark Warren)

The first thing you can do is to begin thinking about being in control of how you express your feelings. You can start sensing that with the power you have you are going

to intervene in and dissolve the old habits, and you are going to initiate new patterns which will contribute significantly to the effectiveness of your coping in the world.

The fact is that when you begin thinking about thinking, you have put your mind in gear. And that is an essential step in taking full control of expressing your anger.  
p. 167

Think! A key word for emergency situations—designed to trigger an alternative program with a far greater likelihood of producing positive results.  
p. 171

(Stress Without Distress by Hans Selye)

Try to keep your mind constantly on the pleasant aspects of life and on actions which can improve your situation. Try to forget everything that is irrevocably ugly or painful. This is perhaps the most efficient way of minimizing stress by what I have called voluntary mental diversion. As a wise German proverb says, “Imitate the sundial’s ways; /Count only the pleasant days.”

Nothing paralyzes your efficiency more than frustration; nothing helps it more than success. Even after the greatest defeats the depressing thought of being a failure is best combated by taking stock of all your past achievements which no one can deny you. Such conscious stock-taking is most effective in re-establishing the self-confidence necessary for future success. There is something even in the most modest career that we are proud to recall – you would be surprised to see how much this can help when everything seems hopeless.  
pp. 142-43

(Birthright by David C. Needham)

Some of you who are reading these words right now are hurting in ways that perhaps no one but God knows anything about. But if Jesus is Lord, your Lord, He still is committed to give Himself to you. “Trust Me, to be to you all that I am!” Be tough on your mind. Bring into captivity – to sword point – every thought that leaves out God and the promises of God.

Time and again you will need to repudiate those rushing, worrisome, squirrel-cage thoughts and replace them with the knowledge of God. Step over the line and let God’s mind be yours. Give Him a chance to lift you high enough to at last see a tiny bit from His eternal vantage point. Yes, the fortresses are real and mighty. But you will find yourself singing as you march around them when God is the biggest thing on your mind!

“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

(Romans 8:37-39)

pp. 229-30

(Feeling Free by Archibald D. Hart)

It is Dr. Albert Ellis who stresses that human beings seem to have a natural tendency to think crookedly and therefore easily establish and maintain self-defeating patterns of behavior and emotion. By “crooked thinking” he means the tendency to think irrationally or to hold on to the most ridiculous beliefs, despite evidence to the contrary. This tendency to think irrationally, Ellis contends, is a major cause for what we experience as neurosis. More importantly for our purpose, he would contend that it is a major factor in causing many of the emotional upsets we experience.

p. 42

...that emotionally disturbed persons are not victimized by concealed forces that are beyond their awareness and over which they have no control. Emotions are neither mysterious nor impossible to control, but can be explored and understood in the context of one's learning history and current patterns of thinking.

p. 43

James Allen wrote a wonderful little book called As a Man Thinketh, in which he says (springing off Proverbs 23:7): “A man is literally what he thinks, his character being the complete sum of all his thoughts.”

I would take this idea further and reword what Allen says as follows: “People feel what they think. Their emotions are the complete sum of all their thoughts.” I am sure that James Allen would agree with me if he were alive today, based on what he has to say in the rest of his book. He was born in 1864 and died in 1912, but in this little book he was able to describe much of what would become our modern approach to cognitive therapeutic psychology. Listen to what he has to say: “The body is the servant of the mind. IT obeys the operations of the mind, whether they be deliberately chosen or automatically expressed. At the bidding of unlawful thoughts the body sinks rapidly into disease and decay; at the command of glad and beautiful thoughts it becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.”

pp. 43-44

The influence of our beliefs on our emotions was even understood by Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 121-180) who said in The Meditations: “If you are pained by an external thing it is not this thing that disturbs you – but your judgment about it.”

p. 46

Let me quote James Allen again on this point:

A noble and Godlike character is not a thing of favor or chance, but is the natural result of continued effort in right thinking...he is the maker of his character, the molder of his life, and the builder of his destiny, if he will watch, control, and alter his thoughts, tracing their efforts upon himself, upon others, and upon his life and circumstances.

p. 46-47

Do you want to be free? Do you want to be in control of your emotions and not have them control you and be so unafraid of them that they don't have to be avoided? Do you, as a Christian, want your emotions to enhance your spiritual life rather than work against it? You can only do this if you rise up and begin influencing your thoughts. The stream of your thoughts will be the most important factor which influences how you feel. If you can keep your hand firmly on the wheel of you thoughts, you will not be subjected to extremes of emotional buffeting. If you watch, control, and alter your thoughts by patient practice and trace their effects upon you and others, you can move yourself to the place of emotional freedom. I trust that the remainder of this book will help you do this, and that we will discover together that Solomon was right when he said, "For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he..." (see Proverbs 23:7 KJV).  
p. 58

The New Testament does not lead us to believe that from the moment of our commitment to God we will no longer have any problems or any need to repair past damage and inadequacies. "Think your way through," Paul says, "to a sober estimate of yourself" (see Romans 12:3). This means work.  
p. 125

(The Seduction of Christianity by Dave Hunt & T.A. McMahon)

Norman Vincent Peale calls visualization "positive thinking carried one more step further." This is quite an endorsement from the man who has spent his life promoting Positive Thinking! Amway Crown Direct Distributor Bunny Marks, explains the power of visualization in a motivational tape titled "What You See Is What You'll Be":

So the first thing we must do if we wish to achieve and live the life of success, the life of plenty and happiness, is first of all to visualize it.

We actually create reality by what we visualize. The picture you hold in your mind will develop the same way a film develops.... If you start visualizing what you desire, you shall have it! You can have anything you desire if you want it badly enough and begin to visualize it....

So the picture's the secret, that is the key; for the picture you hold is the picture you'll be!

Dr. Peale has been involved in visualization ever since, apparently without realizing that he is using a shamanistic technique in attempting to impose his will upon God and other people. Peale writes, "Imaging has been...implicit in all the speaking and writing I have done...only recently has it begun to...be recognized by scientists and medical authorities..." If reality can actually be created or manipulated by visualization, this would allow everyone to play God with the universe. What would happen when competing realities were being visualized by different persons? If visualization taps into some power inherent within the universe and available to anyone, it would be the ultimate weapon to hand over to human egos; and the result would not be paradise, but hell on earth.

“Dr. Schuller,” he was asked, “we hear a lot of talk these days about the New Age, the Age of Aquarius, the type of New Age thinking that we are involved in with Holistic healing and various other things that are part of what is called the New Age. Will you describe the role of what you might consider the New Age minister in the ‘80s and beyond?” Schuller made no protest that he knew nothing of the New Age or that he wasn’t a “New Age minister.” Without hesitating, he replied:

Well, I think it depends upon where you’re working. I believe that the responsibility in this Age is to “positivize” religion. Now this probably doesn’t have much bearing to you people, being Unity people, you’re positive. But I talk a great deal to groups that are not positive...even to what we would call Fundamentalists who deal constantly with words like sin, salvation, repentance, guilt, that sort of thing.

So when I’m dealing with these people....what we have to do is positivize the words that have classically only had a negative interpretation.

“AND WE ARE TAKING EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE TO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.”

(Search My Heart, O God: 365 Appointments with God by Kay Arthur) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright – Kay Arthur, 1999.

Thoughts 527-09

Beloved, think with me a moment: What do you suppose our enemy, the devil, wants most?

He wants our minds, our thoughts! Satan chooses the mind for his battleground because he understands so well the principle laid out in Proverbs 23:7: As a man or woman “thinks within himself, so he is.”

Isn’t this the purpose of brainwashing as a form of combat? If you brainwash a prisoner, you can do with him as you please, and Satan knows this. What kind of thoughts does he attack our minds with? Paul described them in 2 Corinthians 10:5 as “speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God.”

*Lord, help me to protect my mind from the onslaught of Satan’s deception. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, help me dwell only on those thoughts that are pleasing to You.*

p. 344

“Bring thou me out of trouble O Lord: cleanse thou me from secret facets. Keep thy servant also from presumptuous sins; my wanderings of mind and my idle speaking lay

not to my change. Clear away the murk and noisome torrent of foul and lawless thoughts.”

Andrewes

“Yes, O Lord, I beseech thee, look upon me, and put to sleep in me every earthly and evil thought.”

Andrewes

Take my mind and let it think thoughts that please and honor You. Let the mind of Christ my Savior show itself in all my ways! Show itself in all my ways!

Obedience to Christ is the ultimate victory, the joy of triumph.

### 2 Cor. 2:14-17

But thanks be to God who is always leading us in His triumph in Christ and is making known through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. Because we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, and to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is qualified for these things? For we are not like the many who are peddling the word of God, but out of pure motives (sincerity), but as from God we are speaking in Christ in the sight of God.

### 1 Samuel 15:22

But Samuel replied:

“Does the Lord delight in burnt  
offerings and sacrifices  
as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord?  
To obey is better than sacrifice,  
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.

- v. 6 And being in readiness to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

The picture that Paul has in mind is a picture of a military campaign. The battle has been fought. The victory has been won, and every thought is brought into captivity. To maintain the peace we now read in verse 6:

“And being in readiness to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.”

The picture is a picture of military readiness, an alert status, to discipline or punish all disobedience.

The disobedience here is the disobedience of being:

Critical  
Jealous  
Bitter  
Envy  
Impurity  
Hatred  
Revenge

All those thoughts that lead ultimately to acts of disobedience whenever your obedience is complete.

Plummer translates the verse:

We are quite prepared to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

The Living Bible translates it:

I will use these weapons against every rebel who remains after I have first used them on you yourselves, and you surrender to Christ.

Phillips paraphrases it:

Once we are sure of your obedience we shall not shrink from dealing with those who refuse to obey.

### CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The result of the Spirit's work in our lives is the manifestation of the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

LESSON #2: The manifestation of the Spirit-filled life is boldness.

LESSON #3: The Corinthians were evaluating, criticizing, and condemning the Apostle Paul's ministry in Corinth.

LESSON #4: Paul is not defensive in the face of opposition.

LESSON #5: The weapons of our warfare are divinely powerful.

LESSON #6: Are you practicing spiritual mind control in bringing your thoughts captive unto the obedience of Christ?

## LESSON #7: Psalm 19:14

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

(Higher Honor by Robert Boardman)

As a young man, Ichimura searched for truth. When he came into contact with the cutting edge of the Sword of the Spirit, something happened in his life. Here is his account:

Since high school days I thought there must exist a certain kind of truth in life, and I kept looking for it. I believed that capitalism was the cause of social unfairness, contradictions, injustice, and poverty. I believed that if the whole world would come under the control of communism, we could solve all problems. However, the more I studied communism and searched for the “ideal” society, the more my heart turned dark and empty.

Then I met an American Christian. I was impressed by his character. His warm heart, kindness, and love moved my heart and made me curious to know what he believed. Soon I began to read the Bible for the first time in my life. At first I felt it to be very unscientific, especially when I read about Christ’s miracles. But I continued. From the time I began reading, it took almost three years before the truth truly penetrated my heart. One day this passage struck me: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6, KJV). When I came across this verse, I thought this was the answer for the whole universe. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the key to the questions I had all those years.

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### The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference --- Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace; Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right, if I will surrender to His Will; That I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him in the next.

AMEN

(Search My Heart, O God: 365 Appointments with God by Kay Arthur) Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook Press. Copyright – Kay Arthur, 1999.

Failure	527-06	O Father, just when I’m beginning to think I’ve learned my lesson, I find myself headed for the ground once more in defeat. Thank You for Your unconditional love, Your unfailing mercies, and
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Your faithfulness to forgive my sins when I come to You  
repentance and for assuring me that You're still there, my help in  
time of need.  
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Failure      527-07      By an act of my will, I choose to forget all my past failure and sins,  
as You have, Father. I will concentrate instead on the path ahead.  
I believe that You will complete the work You have started in me,  
relying on the Holy Spirit to guide me in truth, I press forward on  
the journey of faith.  
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