CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

2 Corinthians Chapter 10 —
The Weapons of Our Warfare

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

2 Corinthians Chapter 10 marks a major change in tone.

Chapters 1–9 were warm and full of comfort.

Paul rejoiced that most of the Corinthians had repented.

But in Chapters 10–13, Paul speaks more firmly.

He addresses a group in Corinth that was still opposing him.

Certain visiting teachers had come to the church.

They criticized Paul.

They said he was bold in his letters but weak in person.

They said his speaking was unimpressive.

They said he lived by worldly standards.

And they promoted themselves by comparing themselves with one another.

Paul answers them.

But he does not fight the way they fight.

He begins with the gentleness of Christ.

Then he explains how believers fight spiritual battles.

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds."

Paul's weapons are not human cleverness, pressure, or self-promotion.

They are the power of God, His truth, and prayer.

And the goal is to bring every thought captive to obey Christ.

Paul also explains that his authority was given by the Lord.

It was given for building people up, not tearing them down.

Finally, he refuses to measure himself by others.

He will only boast in the Lord.

"For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends."

The chapter moves through five movements:

- Paul's Appeal in Christ's Gentleness (verses 1–2).
- Spiritual Warfare and Divine Power (verses 3–6).
- True Authority Comes from God (verses 7–9).
- Paul's Boldness in Letters and Deeds (verses 10–11).
- Commending Ourselves Only in the Lord (verses 12–18).

The central truth of 2 Corinthians 10 is:

Believers fight spiritual battles with God's mighty weapons, bringing every thought captive to Christ, using authority only to build others up, and seeking approval not from comparison or self-promotion, but from the Lord alone.

I. THE GENTLENESS OF CHRIST

2 Corinthians 10:1 — Paul's Personal Appeal

"Now I, Paul, myself appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who in person am humble among you, but when absent am bold toward you."

"Now I, Paul, myself."

Paul makes this appeal very personal.

He is speaking for himself.

"Appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Paul does not begin with threats.

He begins with the character of Jesus.

Meekness is not weakness.

It is strength under control.

Gentleness means being patient and kind, even when you have the right to be harsh.

Jesus had all power, yet He was gentle with people.

"I who in person am humble among you, but when absent am bold toward you."

Paul is quoting what his critics said about him.

They mocked him as timid in person and brave only in his letters.

Paul takes their insult and turns it.

His humility in person was not weakness.

It was the gentleness of Christ.

Cross References

Matthew 11:29

> Come work alongside Me and let Me teach you. I am kind and humble, and with Me your souls will find rest.

Matthew 21:5

> Tell the people of Zion, “Look, your King is coming to you. He is gentle, and He is riding on a donkey.”

Philippians 2:8

> He humbled Himself as a man and obeyed God all the way to death, even death on a cross.

Spiritual Principle

Christlike meekness is strength under control.

Application

When you are criticized, do you respond with the gentleness of Christ?

II. I BEG YOU

2 Corinthians 10:2 — Not Having to Be Bold

“I beg you that when I am present, I may not have to be bold with that confidence with which I intend to confront those who think we live according to the flesh.”

“I beg you.”

Paul pleads with them.

“That when I am present, I may not have to be bold.”

Paul was coming to Corinth again.

He hoped he would not need to be firm.

“With that confidence with which I intend to confront those.”

But if necessary, he was ready.

He would confront those who opposed the truth.

“Who think we live according to the flesh.”

His critics claimed Paul acted from worldly motives.

They said he was driven by human weakness or selfish plans.

Paul wanted the church to deal with the problem before he arrived.

He preferred gentleness.

But he would not avoid firmness if it was needed.

Cross References

Romans 8:1

> God will never condemn the people who are joined to Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:16

> So I tell you, let the Spirit guide your life. Then you will not do what your sinful nature wants.

1 Corinthians 4:21

> Which do you want? Should I come to you with a rod to correct you, or with love and a gentle spirit?

Spiritual Principle

Love prefers gentleness, but it will be firm when truth requires it.

Key Truth

Gentleness and firmness are not enemies; both can come from love.

III. NOT ACCORDING TO THE FLESH

2 Corinthians 10:3 — A Different Kind of War

“For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh.”

“Though we live in the flesh.”

Paul was a human being.

He lived in a physical body with real weaknesses.

“We do not wage war according to the flesh.”

But his battles were not fought the way the world fights.

The Christian life is a spiritual battle.

Our real enemy is not people.

It is sin, lies, and the powers of darkness.

So we cannot win with human strength, anger, or manipulation.

Cross References

Ephesians 6:12

> The people around us are not our real enemy. We are in a battle with evil powers and spiritual forces that rule the darkness of this world and work in the unseen world.

1 Timothy 1:18

> Timothy, my son, I give you this command because of the prophecies once spoken about you. Remember them, and fight the good fight.

John 18:36

> Jesus said, “My kingdom does not come from this world. If it did, My followers would fight to keep Me from being handed over. But My kingdom is from another place.”

Spiritual Principle

Believers live in this world, but they do not fight the way this world fights.

Application

Are you trying to win spiritual battles with worldly methods?

IV. MIGHTY THROUGH GOD

2 Corinthians 10:4 — Pulling Down Strongholds

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds.”

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal.”

Carnal means fleshly or merely human.

Our weapons are not clever arguments for their own sake.

They are not pressure, threats, or popularity.

“But mighty through God.”

Our weapons have power because they come from God.

They include God's word, prayer, faith, truth, and the gospel.

“For the pulling down of strongholds.”

A **stronghold** was a fortress.

In ancient times, cities had strong walls and towers.

Paul uses this picture for spiritual fortresses.

These can be false ideas, pride, sinful patterns, or lies that people trust in.

Human strength cannot tear them down.

But God's power can.

Cross References

Ephesians 6:11

> Put on all the armor God provides, so you can stand firm against the devil's tricks.

Jeremiah 1:10

> Today I am putting you in charge of nations and kingdoms, to pull up and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, and to build and to plant.

Proverbs 21:22

> A wise person can attack a city of strong soldiers and tear down the fortress they trusted.

Spiritual Principle

Spiritual strongholds fall only by God's power.

Key Truth

No stronghold is too strong for the weapons God gives.

V. EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE

2 Corinthians 10:5 — Obeying Christ

“We demolish arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Paul now describes what the strongholds are.

“We demolish arguments.”

These are ideas and reasonings that oppose God's truth.

“And every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.”

Pride builds high towers in the mind.

It sets itself up against God.

It refuses to bow to Him.

“And we take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

This is the goal.

The battle is fought in the mind.

A captive is a prisoner brought under control.

Paul pictures every thought being brought under the authority of Christ.

This includes the false ideas of others.

It also includes our own thoughts.

Victory begins in the mind.

Cross References

Colossians 2:8

> Be careful that no one captures your mind with empty, deceiving ideas that come from human tradition and the powers of this world, and not from Christ.

Isaiah 55:8

> The Lord says, “My thoughts are not like your thoughts, and My ways are not like your ways.”

Proverbs 21:30

> No wisdom, no understanding, and no plan can succeed against the Lord.

Spiritual Principle

True victory begins when every thought is brought under the authority of Christ.

Application

What thought do you need to take captive and bring to Christ today?

VI. READY TO DEAL WITH DISOBEDIENCE

2 Corinthians 10:6 — Once Your Obedience Is Complete

“And we are ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.”

“We are ready to punish every act of disobedience.”

Paul was prepared to discipline those who kept rebelling.

As an apostle, he had authority to deal with them.

“Once your obedience is complete.”

But first, Paul wanted the whole church to be fully obedient.

He wanted the faithful members to take their stand first.

Then he would deal with those who remained rebellious.

Paul was patient.

He gave the church time to respond.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 2:9

> I wrote to you to test you, to see if you would obey in every way.

1 Peter 2:15

> God wants you to silence the foolish talk of ignorant people by doing what is good.

Hebrews 5:9

> After He was made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys Him.

Spiritual Principle

God's discipline is patient, giving His people time to obey.

Key Truth

Church discipline should wait for the faithful to stand firm, and then deal wisely with ongoing rebellion.

VII. LOOK BEYOND APPEARANCES

2 Corinthians 10:7 — We Also Belong to Christ

“Do you look only on outward appearances? If anyone is convinced that he belongs to Christ, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.”

“Do you look only on outward appearances?”

Some Corinthians judged by what was on the surface.

The false teachers looked impressive.

Paul did not.

But looks can fool people.

“If anyone is convinced that he belongs to Christ.”

Some were claiming a special connection to Christ.

“Let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.”

Paul says, think again.

If they belong to Christ, so does Paul.

No one has a monopoly on Christ.

Cross References

1 Samuel 16:7

> The Lord said to Samuel, “Do not judge by how he looks or how tall he is. People look at the outside, but I look at the heart.”

John 7:24

> Stop judging by what you see on the surface. Judge fairly and rightly.

Galatians 3:29

> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's children and will receive what God promised.

Spiritual Principle

God judges the heart, not outward appearance, and so should we.

Application

Are you judging any servant of God by appearance alone?

VIII. AUTHORITY FOR BUILDING UP

2 Corinthians 10:8 — Not for Tearing Down

“For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us—for building you up, not for tearing you down—I will not be ashamed.”

“Even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us.”

Paul's authority was real.

It was given by the Lord.

Not by himself.

“For building you up, not for tearing you down.”

This is the purpose of spiritual authority.

God gives leaders authority to build people up.

To strengthen them.

To help them grow.

Not to control them or crush them.

“I will not be ashamed.”

Paul could defend his authority without shame, because he had used it rightly.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 13:10

> That is why I write these things while I am away. Then when I come, I will not have to be harsh in using the authority the Lord gave me to build you up, not to tear you down.

Ephesians 4:29

> Do not let any harmful words come out of your mouths. Say only what helps others grow and meets their needs, so that what you say does good to those who hear it.

Jeremiah 1:10

> Look, I have given you authority over nations to tear down and to destroy, and also to build and to plant.

Spiritual Principle

Authority in the church is given to build people up, not to dominate them.

Key Truth

The test of godly leadership is whether people are strengthened by it.

IX. NOT TRYING TO FRIGHTEN YOU

2 Corinthians 10:9 — Paul's Letters

“I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters.”

Paul's letters had been strong.

Some accused him of trying to scare people.

Paul says that was never his goal.

He wrote out of love.

He wrote to correct and to heal.

Not to frighten or control.

Cross References

1 Thessalonians 2:11

> You know that we treated each of you the way a father treats his own children.

2 Corinthians 1:24

> We are not trying to control your faith. We are working with you for your joy, because you stand firm by faith.

1 Corinthians 4:21

> What do you want? Shall I come with a stick, or with love and gentleness?

Spiritual Principle

Godly correction aims to heal, not to frighten.

Application

When you correct others, is your goal to help them or to scare them?

X. WEIGHTY LETTERS, WEAK PRESENCE

2 Corinthians 10:10 — What the Critics Said

“For some say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech amounts to nothing.””

Here Paul quotes his critics directly.

“His letters are weighty and strong.”

They admitted his letters were powerful.

“But his bodily presence is weak.”

They said he was unimpressive in person.

Some believe Paul may have had a physical weakness or illness.

“And his speech amounts to nothing.”

They said he was a poor speaker.

In Corinth, people admired polished speakers.

Paul did not try to impress with clever speech.

He preached Christ crucified in weakness, so that faith would rest on God's power.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 2:3

> When I was with you, I felt weak and afraid, and I was trembling.

Galatians 4:13

> You remember that I first preached the gospel to you because I was sick.

1 Corinthians 2:1

> Brothers and sisters, when I came to you, I did not use fancy words or show off my wisdom when I told you God's message.

Spiritual Principle

God's power is not limited by the weakness of His messenger.

Key Truth

God does not need impressive people; He needs faithful ones.

XI. WORDS AND DEEDS THE SAME

2 Corinthians 10:11 — In Letters and in Actions

“Let such people realize this: What we are in letters when absent, we will also be in actions when present.”

Paul answers the charge.

His critics said he was all talk.

Paul says his words and his actions match.

When he arrives, he will act just as firmly as he wrote.

Paul was a man of integrity.

What he said, he did.

Cross References

James 1:22

> Do not just listen to God's word and fool yourselves. Do what it says.

Titus 1:16

> They say they know God, but the way they live shows they do not.

1 John 3:18

> Little children, let us love not only in what we say, but in what we truly do.

Spiritual Principle

Integrity means our actions match our words.

Application

Do your actions match what you say you believe?

XII. THE FOLLY OF COMPARISON

2 Corinthians 10:12 — Measuring by One Another

“For we dare not classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.”

“We dare not classify or compare ourselves.”

Paul says this with a touch of irony.

He would not join their game.

“With some who commend themselves.”

The false teachers praised themselves.

“When they measure themselves by one another.”

They used each other as the standard.

They looked good only because they compared themselves with people like themselves.

“They are without understanding.”

This is foolish.

If you measure yourself only by others, you will never see yourself truly.

The true standard is God, not people.

Cross References

Proverbs 27:2

> Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth. Let a stranger do it, not your own lips.

Luke 18:11

> The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself: “God, I thank You that I am not like other people, like robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even this tax collector.”

Romans 12:3

> God has given me grace, so I am telling each of you: do not puff yourself up. Look at yourself honestly, using the faith God has handed out to you as your measure.

Spiritual Principle

Comparing ourselves with others leads to pride and blindness.

Spiritual Warning

If you measure yourself by others, you will always find someone who makes you look good.

XIII. WITHIN PROPER LIMITS

2 Corinthians 10:13 — The Field God Assigned

“But we will not boast beyond proper limits, but only within the field of service God has assigned to us—a field that extends even to you.”

“We will not boast beyond proper limits.”

Paul would not claim more than God had given him.

“But only within the field of service God has assigned to us.”

God gives each servant a field of work.

Paul's field was to preach to the Gentiles.

“A field that extends even to you.”

Corinth was within Paul's field.

God had sent him there.

He had founded the church.

The false teachers had come into a field God had given to Paul.

Cross References

Romans 12:3

> By the grace God has given me, I say to each of you: do not think too highly of yourself. Be honest about yourself, measuring yourself by the faith God gave you.

Romans 15:20

> My goal has always been to preach the gospel where Christ has not been heard of, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation.

1 Corinthians 3:5

> Who is Apollos? Who is Paul? We are only servants who helped you believe. Each of us did the work the Lord gave us.

Spiritual Principle

Be faithful in the field God has given you, without claiming what He has not.

Application

What field of service has God given you?

XIV. FIRST TO CORINTH

2 Corinthians 10:14 — Coming with the Gospel

“For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we had not reached you, since we came to you with the gospel of Christ.”

“We are not overextending ourselves.”

Paul was not reaching too far.

“As though we had not reached you.”

He had actually come to Corinth.

“Since we came to you with the gospel of Christ.”

Paul was the first to bring the gospel to Corinth.

He planted the church there.

His claim was not empty.

It rested on what God had done through him.

Cross References

Romans 15:20

> I have always wanted to preach where Christ's name was not yet known, so I would not build on another person's work.

Acts 18:1

> After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

Romans 1:15

> That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel to you who live in Rome too.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants can speak with confidence about what God has truly done through them.

Key Truth

Honest testimony points to what God has done, not to what we wish we had done.

XV. A GROWING FIELD

2 Corinthians 10:15 — As Your Faith Increases

“We do not boast beyond proper limits in the labors of others. Instead, we hope that, as your faith increases, our area of ministry among you will be greatly enlarged.”

“We do not boast beyond proper limits in the labors of others.”

Paul did not take credit for other people's work.

The false teachers were doing exactly that.

They came into a church Paul had planted and acted as if it were theirs.

“As your faith increases.”

Paul hoped the Corinthians would grow spiritually.

“Our area of ministry among you will be greatly enlarged.”

As they grew, Paul's work would grow.

A strong church would become a base for reaching further.

Cross References

Romans 15:20

> It has been my aim to tell the good news where Christ is unknown, so I would not build on a foundation someone else laid.

1 Corinthians 3:6

> My job was the planting, and Apollos did the watering. But the growing came from God.

Colossians 1:28

> We tell people about Christ. We warn and teach everyone with all wisdom, so that we can present each person mature in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

The growth of believers opens the door for wider ministry.

Application

Is your spiritual growth helping the gospel spread further?

XVI. THE REGIONS BEYOND

2 Corinthians 10:16 — Preaching Further

“Then we may preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, without boasting in another man's work already done.”

“Then we may preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.”

Paul's heart always looked further.

He wanted to take the gospel to places that had never heard.

Later he hoped to go as far as Spain.

“Without boasting in another man's work already done.”

Paul did not want to build on someone else's foundation.

He wanted to go where Christ was not yet known.

This is the heart of a missionary.

Cross References

Romans 15:20

> I have made it my aim to preach where people have never heard of Christ.

Romans 15:23

> Now there is no more place for me to work in these areas, and for many years I have wanted to visit you.

1 Corinthians 3:10

> By the grace God gave me, I laid a foundation like a skilled builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds.

Spiritual Principle

The gospel always reaches toward those who have not yet heard.

Key Truth

God's people should always be looking to the regions beyond.

XVII. BOAST IN THE LORD

2 Corinthians 10:17 — The Right Kind of Boasting

“But, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.””

Paul quotes Jeremiah 9.

He had also used this verse in 1 Corinthians 1.

It sums up the whole chapter.

Do not boast in your gifts.

Do not boast in your speaking.

Do not boast in your appearance.

Do not boast in your success.

Boast in the Lord.

Everything good in our lives and ministry comes from Him.

Cross References

Jeremiah 9:24

> If anyone wants to boast, let him boast that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who shows faithful love, fairness, and right living on the earth, because these things please Me.

1 Corinthians 1:31

> So, as the Scriptures say, “If anyone is going to brag, let him brag about the Lord.”

Galatians 6:14

> I never want to brag about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Principle

All glory belongs to God, so all boasting should be about Him.

Application

When people praise you, do you point them to the Lord?

XVIII. THE LORD'S APPROVAL

2 Corinthians 10:18 — Whom the Lord Commends

“For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.”

“It is not the one who commends himself who is approved.”

Self-praise means nothing in God's eyes.

The false teachers wrote their own recommendations.

But their praise of themselves proved nothing.

“But the one whom the Lord commends.”

The only approval that matters is the Lord's.

One day, every servant will stand before Him.

His word will be the final word.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 4:5

> So do not judge anything before the right time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring hidden things to light and show the motives of every heart. Then each person will receive praise from God.

Romans 2:29

> A true Jew is one who is Jewish inside, whose heart has been changed by the Spirit, not by written rules. That person's praise comes from God, not from people.

Proverbs 27:2

> Do not praise yourself. Let other people do it, even someone you do not know.

Spiritual Principle

Only the Lord's approval truly counts.

Key Truth

Live for the One whose “Well done” matters forever.

XIX. SIX GREAT LESSONS FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 10

1. Christlike Meekness Is Strength Under Control

“I appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

Principle:

Paul appeals gently but stands ready to act firmly if necessary.

2. Spiritual Battles Require Spiritual Weapons

“The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.”

Principle:

Arguments, pride, and lies must be torn down by truth and prayer, not worldly means.

3. Every Thought Must Be Brought Under Christ

“We take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Principle:

True victory begins in the mind.

4. Authority in the Church Is for Building Up

“For building you up, not for tearing you down.”

Principle:

Leaders are given authority to strengthen others, not to dominate them.

5. Self-Commendation Is Empty

“It is not the one who commends himself who is approved.”

Principle:

True approval comes only from the Lord, not from human comparisons.

6. Boasting Belongs to God Alone

“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Principle:

All victories, growth, and ministry fruit must be credited to Him.

XX. THE WEAPONS OF OUR WARFARE

Verses 3–6 describe the Christian's spiritual battle.

The Battle

It is spiritual, not physical.

The Enemy

- Arguments against God.
- Pride that lifts itself up against God.
- Lies and false ideas.
- Thoughts that refuse to obey Christ.

The Weapons

- The word of God.
- Prayer.
- Faith.
- Truth.
- The gospel of Christ.

Weapons We Do Not Use

- Manipulation.
- Pressure and threats.
- Anger and insults.

- Self-promotion.

The Goal

“Every thought captive to obey Christ.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The battle is the Lord's, and so is the power to win it.

XXI. TAKING THOUGHTS CAPTIVE

Verse 5 gives practical help for the battle of the mind.

1. Notice the Thought

Pay attention to what you are thinking.

2. Test the Thought

Ask, “Is this true according to God's word?”

3. Capture the Thought

Do not let a false or sinful thought run free.

4. Bring It to Christ

Hand it over to Him in prayer.

5. Replace It with Truth

Fill your mind with what God says.

6. Obey Christ

Let your actions follow His truth.

Key Truth

What we allow to rule our minds will soon rule our lives.

XXII. COMPARISON VERSUS THE LORD'S APPROVAL

Verses 12–18 show two different ways to measure a life.

The World's Way

- Commend yourself.
- Compare yourself with others.
- Take credit for other people's work.
- Boast in yourself.
- Seek the approval of people.

God's Way

- Let the Lord commend you.
- Measure yourself by God's standard.
- Be faithful in the field God gives you.
- Boast in the Lord.
- Seek the approval of God.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Stop comparing yourself with others; start living for the Lord's approval.

XXIII. WHAT 2 CORINTHIANS 10 TEACHES ABOUT JESUS

He Is Meek and Gentle

“The meekness and gentleness of Christ.”

He Is the One We Obey

“Every thought captive to obey Christ.”

We Belong to Him

“Just as he is Christ's, so also are we.”

He Gives Authority to His Servants

“The authority the Lord gave us.”

His Gospel Must Go Further

“The gospel of Christ... in the regions beyond.”

He Is the One Who Commends

“The one whom the Lord commends.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The gentle Christ is also the mighty Lord whose truth tears down strongholds and whose approval is all that matters.

XXIV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why does Paul's tone change in Chapter 10?

He turns to address a group in Corinth that was still opposing him and following false teachers.

Question 2

What is meekness?

Strength under control, shown in gentleness and patience even when one has power.

Question 3

What did Paul's critics say about him?

That he was bold in letters but weak in person, a poor speaker, and that he lived by worldly standards.

Question 4

What does it mean that we do not wage war according to the flesh?

Our battles are spiritual, so we do not fight with human strength, anger, or manipulation.

Question 5

What are our spiritual weapons?

God's word, prayer, faith, truth, and the gospel, made mighty by God's power.

Question 6

What are strongholds?

Spiritual fortresses such as false ideas, pride, and sinful patterns that set themselves against God.

Question 7

What does it mean to take every thought captive?

To bring each thought under Christ's authority, rejecting what is false and obeying what is true.

Question 8

What is the purpose of authority in the church?

To build people up, not to tear them down.

Question 9

How did Paul answer the charge that he was all talk?

He said his actions in person would match his words in his letters.

Question 10

Why is comparing ourselves with others foolish?

Because others are not the true standard.

Comparison leads to pride or blindness.

Question 11

What does it mean to boast in the Lord?

To give God credit for everything good in our lives and ministry.

Question 12

What should 2 Corinthians 10 change about the way Christians live today?

2 Corinthians 10 should cause believers to live:

- Responding to criticism with Christ's gentleness.
- Fighting spiritual battles with spiritual weapons.
- Taking every thought captive to Christ.
- Using any authority to build others up.
- Letting their actions match their words.
- Refusing to compare themselves with others.
- Being faithful in the field God has given them.
- Seeking the Lord's approval above all.

XXV. PERSONAL APPLICATION

2 Corinthians 10 asks several important questions.

How Do I Respond to Criticism?

With anger, or with the gentleness of Christ?

What Weapons Am I Using?

God's word and prayer, or worldly methods?

Is There a Stronghold in My Life?

What area needs to be torn down by God's power?

Am I Taking My Thoughts Captive?

Or am I letting them run free?

How Do I Use My Influence?

Do I build others up or tear them down?

Do My Words and Actions Match?

Am I the same in public and in private?

Do I Compare Myself with Others?

Does it make me proud or discouraged?

Whose Approval Am I Seeking?

The Lord's, or people's?

XXVI. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“The Battle for the Mind”

Every war has a battlefield.

For the Christian, one of the most important battlefields is the mind.

Sin usually begins with a thought.

A lie believed.

A doubt welcomed.

A proud idea entertained.

A bitter thought replayed again and again.

If the thought is left alone, it grows.

It becomes an attitude.

The attitude becomes a habit.

The habit becomes a stronghold.

But God has given us weapons.

His word exposes the lie.

Prayer brings the battle to Him.

His Spirit gives us strength.

We can capture the thought before it captures us.

This creates a powerful principle.

Strongholds are built one thought at a time.

And with God's help, they can be torn down one thought at a time.

Principle:

Win the battle for your mind by bringing every thought to Christ.

XXVII. FINAL APPLICATION

2 Corinthians Chapter 10 shows how a servant of Christ fights.

He begins with gentleness.

He fights with spiritual weapons.

He brings every thought captive to Christ.

He uses authority to build up.

He lives with integrity.

He refuses to compare himself with others.

And he boasts only in the Lord.

2 Corinthians 10 therefore reminds us:

Never mistake gentleness for weakness.

Never fight spiritual battles with worldly weapons.

Never let your thoughts run free from Christ.

Never use authority to tear people down.

Never measure yourself by others.

The church does not need people who promote themselves.

It needs:

Servants who are gentle like Christ.

Soldiers who fight with God's weapons.

Minds that are captive to Christ.

And hearts that seek only the Lord's approval.

The same Lord still calls:

Tell people that God's power can tear down any stronghold.

Tell people that every thought can be brought to Christ.

Tell people that the Lord's approval is what matters.

Tell people the gospel, even in the regions beyond.

And as you live:

Be gentle.

Fight with God's weapons.

Take every thought captive.

Boast in the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Thank You that we do not fight our battles alone or in our own strength.

Thank You for the weapons You have given us, mighty through You for pulling down strongholds.

Thank You that every lie, every proud thought, and every argument against You can be torn down.

Thank You that Your servants are given authority to build up and not to tear down.

Thank You that Your approval is what truly matters.

Forgive us when we have responded to others without gentleness.

Forgive us when we have fought with worldly weapons.

Forgive us when we have let our thoughts run free from Christ.

Forgive us when we have compared ourselves with others and sought people's praise.

Help us take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Tear down every stronghold in our lives.

Let our words and actions match.

Make us faithful in the field You have given us.

Send Your gospel to the regions beyond.

And teach us to boast only in You.

“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God for the pulling down of strongholds.” — 2 Corinthians 10:4

Central Truth

Believers fight spiritual battles with God's mighty weapons, bringing every thought captive to Christ, using authority only to build others up, and seeking approval not from comparison or self-promotion, but from the Lord alone.

2 Corinthians 10 in One Sentence

Paul appeals to the Corinthians by the gentleness of Christ, explains that believers fight with spiritual weapons that tear down strongholds and take every thought captive to Christ, defends his God-given authority to build them up, and refuses to compare himself with others because only the one the Lord commends is truly approved.