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CONCLUSIONS

10.2.3.3 Ministry part three, 10:1-13:10

Doing ministry as a divinely called apostle is the theme of these final three chapters of the letter body of Second Corinthians.¹ Some of the most vigorous defense of God's calling to Paul is found in these chapters beyond what is found elsewhere in Paul's writings. Yet the content of these chapters is highly customized to the situation that the apostle was addressing at Corinth. It reminds us of the essential nature of Paul's letters: they are his speaking to specific congregations about individualized needs in the Christian community of the addressees. As modern readers, we are privileged to peer over Paul's shoulders to read what was written to these congregations. Sometimes we wish we knew more about the differing situations in the targeted congregation. This would make understanding what the apostle was saying much easier. But because of this circumstantial nature of these letters we must re-

construct as best as we can the particular situations being addressed. Out of his insights for each first century situation will come timeless truths that apply to our situations in modern church life. What makes this possible is [the breath of God](#), θεόπνευστος, embedded in the words of the apostle. In our careful studying of Paul's words under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the eternal wisdom of God comes alive to us and in us to provide divine leadership for our obedience to Christ in our day. The word of God thus becomes vitally relevant.

10.2.3.3.1 Apostolic Leadership, 10:1-18

In this initial section, the emphasis falls upon Paul explaining why he is the same person whether absent or present (cf. summary sentence in 10:11). And that such a person does have the ability to speak demandingly the truth of God to the Corinthians. In the discussion of vv. 1-18 especially, the apostle is answering a charge made against him by some in the Corinthian church that he only speaks strongly through his letters because he is not physically present, since when present he is weak and lacks confidence. The core accusation against him is [κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, living by human standards](#) (v. 2c). This is linked closely to [περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν, about our authorization](#) (v. 8).² Not until 12:11 does the possible issue of apostleship surface even indirectly in the discussion with the labeling of

¹Note the outline for these chapters:

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²The English translation of ἐξουσία as "authority" is very misleading and even theologically dangerous. God never transfers His power to another individual. But He does authorize (ἐξουσία) some to act in His behalf under His authority, so long as they carry out His will exclusively. Paul's argument in these chapters hinges completely on his claim to function under God's authorization and leadership, in opposition to the claims of his opponents.

10.1 δὲ
197 Αὐτὸς ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς
 | διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικειᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 | κατὰ πρόσωπον
 ὅς...μὲν ταπεινὸς (ἐστὶν)
 | ἐν ὑμῖν,
 | ἀπὸν
 -- δὲ...θαρρῶ (ἐστὶν)
 εἰς ὑμᾶς·

10.2 δὲ
198 δέομαι
 μὴ παρῶν
τὸ...θαρρήσαι
 τῇ πεποιθήσει
 ἢ λογίζομαι τολμήσαι
 ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς
 ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας.

10.3 γὰρ
 Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες
 οὐ κατὰ σάρκα

199 στρατευόμεθα,

10.4 γὰρ
200 τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ (ἐστὶν)

ἀλλὰ

201 -- ---- ---- ----- ---- δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ (ἐστὶν)
 πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων,

202 λογισμοὺς καθαίρουντες (ἐσμεν)

10.5 καὶ
 πᾶν ὑψωμα
 | ἐπαιρόμενον
 | κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
 | καὶ

203 αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα (ἐσμεν)
 εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 10.6 καὶ
 ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ

204 (ἐσμεν) ἔχοντες
 ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν,
 ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

205 10.7 Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε.
 εἰ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι,

206 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω
 | πάλιν
 | ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
 | καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ (ἐστὶν)
 ὅτι...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς (ἐσμεν).

10.8 γὰρ
 ἐάν τε περισσότερόν τι καυχῆσμαι
 | περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν
 | ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος
 | εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
 | καὶ
 | οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν,

207 οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι

10.9	ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·
10.10	ὅτι...φησὶν,
αὶ	ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν (εἰσὶν) βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, δὲ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).
208	10.11 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ὅτι οἷοί ἐσμεν...ἀπόντες, καὶ τοιοῦτοι (ἐσμεν) παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ.

his opponents as τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων, *super apostles*. The heart of the issue revolves around his right to treat them as his spiritual children since the Christian community in Corinth originated out of his missionary endeavors, and not those of someone else (10:13-16).

The internal flow of thought goes in two basic directions. Verses 1-11 introduces and defines with broad strokes the core issue of Paul's supposed bold/timid personality. This is especially the focus in vv. 1-6, and the contention of its falseness comes in vv. 7-11. Verses 12-18 then contrasts Paul's legitimate boasting to the illegitimate boasting of his opponents. The difference: Paul boasts about what God is doing, while his opponents boast about their accomplishments.

10.2.3.3.1.1 Consistent boldness from Paul, 10:1-11

In this section the apostle responds to accusations made against him by some in the church at Corinth. First, he defines the content of the accusation (vv. 1-2) and asserts how he functions (vv. 3-6). Then he asserts his consistency between being present and being absent from his readers at Corinth (vv. 7-11).

a) *The accusation, vv. 1-6*

10.1 Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς· 2 δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι τῇ πεποιθήσει ἣ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας. 3 Ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, 4 τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες 5 καὶ πᾶν ὑψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 6 καὶ ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

10.1 I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away! — 2 I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards. 3 Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards; 4 for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ. 6 We are ready to punish every disobedience when your obedience is complete.

The introductory statements in #s 197 and 198 lay the issue on the table with a touch of sarcasm. The very intense beginning expression stresses the high level of importance attached to what Paul is about to say: Αὐτὸς δὲ ἐγὼ Παῦλος παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς..., *And I myself Paul am exhorting you....* One should note that παρακαλέω defines an appeal and not a demand. To read this as introducing apostolic authority is very much in error.³ The means of the appeal, διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικείας

³“There is less a note of authoritarian command and more of entreaty (as in Rom 12:1; 15:30; 1 Cor 1:10). Bjerkelund⁴¹ has concluded in regard to Paul's use of clauses with παρακαλέω, ‘appeal,’ that there the verb has neither a sense of commanding (ἐπιτάσσω) nor a sense of entreaty (δέομαι). παρακαλέω is used by Paul when the question of authority is unproblematic and the apostle can speak to the members of the congregation as his brothers and sisters, knowing that they will acknowledge him as apostle. What is in view is a type of admonition that takes into account the moral judgment and spiritual independence of the churches.⁴²” [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 484.]. It is interesting to note Martin's internal contradiction of introducing this as “Paul is preparing to assume the mantle of apostolic authority, which is the central theme of concern in these four chapters.”

10.1 δὲ
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 | διὰ τῆς πραΰτητος καὶ ἐπιεικειᾶς τοῦ Χριστοῦ*,
 | κατὰ πρόσωπον
 ὅς... μὲν ταπεινὸς (ἐστὶν)
 | ἐν ὑμῖν,
 | ἀπὼν
 -- δὲ... θαρρῶ
 εἰς ὑμᾶς·

10.2 δὲ
198 δέομαι
 παρῶν
 τὸ μὴ... θαρρῆσαι
 τῇ πεποιθήσει
 ἢ λογίζομαι τολμῆσαι
 ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς
 κατὰ σάρκα
 ὡς... περιπατοῦντας.

10.3 γὰρ
 Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες
 οὐ κατὰ σάρκα

199 στρατευόμεθα,
 10.4 γὰρ
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ἀλλὰ
201 -- ---- --- ----- ---- δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ (ἐστὶν)
 πρὸς καθάρσεις ὀχυρωμάτων,

202 λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες (ἐσμεν)
 10.5 καὶ
 πᾶν ὑψωμα
 | ἐπαιρόμενον
 | κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
 | καὶ

203 αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα (ἐσμεν)
 εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 10.6 καὶ
 ἐν ἑτοίμῳ

204 (ἐσμεν) ἔχοντες
 ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν,
 ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

τοῦ Χριστοῦ, [through the meekness and gentleness of Christ](#), reinforces the tone of appeal rather than authoritative demand. Paul comes to his Corinthian readers as a spiritual brother and father, not as an authoritative apostle. His objective is to win over these opponents if possible and not to coerce conformity out of them. It has a somewhat similar tone to the appeal of the Macedonians for permission to participate in the relief offering as depicted in 8:4, μετὰ πολλῆς παρακλήσεως δεόμενοι ἡμῶν. The model of Christ's submissiveness to the Father and His gentleness in dealing with others becomes the defining framework for Paul's appeal to the Corinthians.

The heart of the accusation is stated elliptically in a compound relative clause expression: ὅς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, [who face to face on the one hand am humble in your midst,](#)

but when not present am bold toward you. The ellipsis coupled with an implicit third person frame of reference introduces some sarcasm into the depiction. It is off this relative clause that most of the amplification in the following statements is developed. The concept of ταπεινός is generally considered positive from a biblical perspective (cf. Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5) in the sense of humility as asserted by the noun ταπεινοφροσύνη and the verb ταπεινοφρονέω. But in the Greco-Roman world of Paul it typically was considered to be a weakness and appropriate for compliant slaves and peasants. The adjective ταπεινός, -ή, -όν even in the secular literature can suggest inferior status in society.

The verb θαρρῶ asserts here boldness while not present with the Corinthians (ἀπὼν) ⁴ Appropriate con-

⁴The term occurs in the two forms θαρρέω, and θαρσέω of

confidence is positive, but here the context suggests more the Greco-Roman “take charge” kind of personality. Paul does not spell out whether the implication behind this accusation was that of cowardice or of deception, either of which could be behind this contradictory stance. Some of his further statements may imply incompetence to stand up to opposing arguments face to face. The amplification in vv. 7-11 points in the direction of uncertainty in dealing with people face to face.⁵ It could well be that each of his responses to this charge targets some aspect that stood behind the accusation of inconsistency. But considerable caution should be exercised to not “psychologize” the text in trying to understand it.

The second assertion (# 198) is more challenging to clearly understand: δέομαι δὲ τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι τῇ πεποιθήσει ἢ λογιζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, I ask that when I am present I need not show boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according to human standards. The core verb δέομαι seems unusual here since it denotes rather intensive requesting made to someone. The aorist infinitive phrase, τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι, used as the direct object to δέομαι is very complexly structured. The negative μὴ links to the infinitive θαρρῆσαι with the literal sense of **to not be courageous**. The temporal present participle παρῶν means **while being present**. Thus far the expression seems to be moving along the lines of Paul asking the Corinthians to allow him ‘his timidity’ when he is present at Corinth.

which θαρσέω is attested to be the earlier.¹ It has the basic sense of ‘to dare,’ ‘to be bold,’ and thence ‘to be of good courage,’ ‘to be cheerful,’ ‘to be confident,’ e.g., θάρρει, Xenoph. Cyrop., V, I, 6; also V, I, 17; Jos. Ant., 7, 266: θάρρει καὶ δεισις μηδὲν ὡς τεθνηζόμενος. This gives us the further main senses of a. ‘to trust in something or someone,’ ‘to rely on,’ e.g., with the dat.: τεθαρσηκότες τοῖς ὄρνισι, Hdt., III, 76; θαρρεῖν τοῖς χρήμασι αὐτοῦ, Greek Pap. from the Cairo Museum (ed. E. J. Goodspeed, 1902), 15, 19 (4th cent. A.D.); with the acc.: οὔτε Φίλιππος ἐθάρρει τούτους οὐθ’ οὔτοι Φίλιππον, Demosth., 3, 7; with prep.: ἅμα δὲ θαρρεῖν ἐφ’ ἐαυτῶ καὶ τῇ διαθέσει, Plut. Adulat., 28 (II, 69d); b. ‘to be bold against someone or something,’ ‘to go out bravely to’: θάρσει τὸ τοῦδὲ γ’ ἀνδρός, Soph. Oed. Col., 649: κρέσσον δὲ πάντα θαρσεόντα, Hdt., VII, 50. Except at Prv. 31:11 (θαρσεῖ ἐπ’ αὐτῇ ἡ καρδία τοῦ ἀνδρός αὐτῆς, θαρσεῖν = πρᾶ) the LXX uses the term in the absol.² In the twelve passages in which it is a rendering from the Mas. it is used ten times for כָּחַץ cum negatione and once for כָּחַץ. It always means ‘to be of good courage,’ ‘to be confident,’ ‘not to be afraid.’ Almost always we have θαρσεῖν, θαρρεῖν being found only in Da. and 4 Macc.³ In the NT the Evangelists and Ac. have θαρσεῖν, and Pl. and Hb. θαρρεῖν.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 3:25.]

⁵The early church traditions about his ongoing health issues having severely scared his physical appearance may well have arisen from a particular understanding of this face-to-face timidity. But again concrete evidence of this is lacking.

The phrase τὸ μὴ παρῶν θαρρῆσαι is then qualified by the impersonal agency idea of τῇ πεποιθήσει with the literal sense of **by boldness**. This noun modifier is then itself modified by the relative clause ἢ λογιζομαι τολμῆσαι ἐπὶ τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **by which I am considering to dare to oppose certain ones considering us to be living by the flesh**. At least part of what Paul is getting at seems to be a request of the Corinthians to not force him to be intensely stern with his critics. Implicit in this is the desire to be able to respond to them based on the needs of a face to face encounter, rather than the Corinthians demanding that Paul “mow them down” when he gets to Corinth. The apostle is more interested in winning them over than in defeating them, and wants the freedom to respond as the situation merits rather than fulfill a set expectations by evidently the majority of the church members, or at least the house church leaders in the city. He refuses to turn this into an ‘us vs. them’ contest.

Their criticism of Paul grew out of the charge that he and his associates were κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **living by the flesh**. Precisely what this implies beyond not being in obedience to God is difficult to assess. Perhaps it relates to accusations of Paul using some of the relief offering for himself rather than giving it all to the Jerusalem Christians (cf. chaps 8-9). In 11:4, the apostle accuses at least some in the church have readily adopted a very different version of the Gospel than the one he has preached consistently in his ministry. And the source of this alternative gospel seemingly has come from outsiders arriving in the city rather than being a home grown twisting of the apostolic Gospel. If, as some commentators think, this alludes to Judaizing influences from Jerusalem similar to what Paul faced in the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:6-9). Then the failure to obey the Torah charge there now equals here κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, **living by worldly standards**.

If the apostle did not move on to more narrowly define what he meant, this broad equating to the two situations would be more workable. But the bold/timid accusation does not fit the equating of these two situations. No such charge against Paul was ever made by the Judaizers at Galatia. The accusations made in Corinth seem to be different from those made against Paul by the Judaizers in Galatia. Plus Paul’s response is very different in Second Corinthians than it was in Galatians.

Who these opponents (τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς, **some calculating against us**) were remains as difficult as ever to identify. What they were saying about Paul was identified in verse one with ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, **who is humble/lowly face to face in your midst but when absent is courageous toward you**. This seems to be more a per-

sonality issue being judged by worldly standards than any kind of religious teaching issue. Additionally, this surfaces in the accusation against Paul in 10:10, ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος, **For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”** This criticism of his physical appearance could possibly imply that the apostle was scarred or in some way unappealing in his appearance.⁶ But just as possible is the meaning that in his oral delivery the apostle lacked a forceful ‘presence’ that commanded respect from listeners. Given the Greek emphasis upon rhetorical skills of oral persuasion, this idea is a likely meaning of the accusation leveled at Paul.⁷ Paul’s oratorical skills were perceived to be subpar.

But was this actually true? The exceptional use of very sophisticated Greek rhetorical skills in his writings would argue against this. Also the very existence of the Corinthian Christian community in large part due to his oral preaching of the Gospel would question the validity of this accusation. Yet one must not overlook Paul’s earlier depreciation of his oratorical skills in 1 Cor. 2:3-5.⁸ To be sure, he does not indicate that

⁶“παρουσία (‘presence’) may refer simply to ‘being present,’ with τοῦ σώματος emphasizing the actual or personal nature of the presence and ἀσθενής meaning ‘weak’ in the sense of ‘feeble’ or ‘puny.’ Thus, ‘when he is actually present he is weak’ (Furnish 465) or ‘when he appears in person he is seen to be but a feeble man’ (Cassirer).¹⁷⁶ ἀσθενής would then be almost synonymous with ταπεινός in v. 1. Alternatively, παρουσία may bear a broader meaning that includes the ideas of appearance and demeanor (cf. the English word ‘presence’). In this case, as an adjectival or Semitic genitive, τοῦ σώματος will mean ‘bodily,’ ‘personal’ or ‘physical’¹⁷⁷ and ἀσθενής ‘insignificant’ or ‘unimpressive.’ Thus, ‘his personal appearance is insignificant’ (TCNT, Goodspeed) or ‘his personal presence is unimpressive’ (Weymouth, NASB).¹⁷⁸ If this whole phrase relates to one of the accepted qualifications for oratorical prowess (see below),¹⁷⁹ this second, alternative view is to be preferred.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 699.]

⁷“In the ancient rhetorical handbooks ὑπόκρισις denoted an orator’s ‘delivery,’ which included not only his verbal and elocutionary skills but also his bodily ‘presence,’ the impression made by his physical appearance, his dress, and his general demeanor.¹⁸² The dual allegation of Paul’s adversaries reflects these two aspects of ὑπόκρισις.¹⁸³” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 700.]

⁸**1 Cor. 2:1-5.** 2.1 Κἀγὼ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἤλθον οὐ καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κἀγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγους ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀποδείξει

he could not use them if he had desired to (as 2:6-16 elaborates⁹), but he opted to focus on the Gospel contents and let the Holy Spirit take his very human words and turn them into conviction that produced faith commitment to Christ. If this accusation against Paul at Corinth had a non-Jewish Greek source, it came out of the pure Greek culture that put premium emphasis upon oratorical eloquence. Some diaspora Jews might be expecting this, but a religious teacher would more likely be expected to present ideas in the manner of a scribal Jew, which differed dramatically from the Greek expectation.

After getting the issue on the table in vv. 1-2, the apostle begins responding to is in vv. 3-6, a single Greek sentence introduced by γὰρ. This sets up the response as justification for raising the issue in the sentence of vv. 1-2.

10.3 γὰρ
Ἐν σαρκὶ περιπατοῦντες
οὐ κατὰ σάρκα
199 στρατευόμεθα,

The first justification comes in statement 199 in v. 3: Ἐν σαρκὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦντες οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **for although living in the flesh not by the flesh do we wage war.**

Here a sharp contrast between living (περιπατοῦντες) and fighting (στρατευόμεθα) is made. It centers in the two prepositional phrases Ἐν σαρκὶ and οὐ κατὰ σάρκα. The use of the noun σὰρξ back to back but in different senses of meaning is effective and dramatic. Also the adjective σαρκικῶς (v. 4) from σαρκικός, -ή, -όν is in the pot as well. The sense of σὰρξ here is not literally flesh, nor merely human. The English word physical doesn’t

πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁹Yet 2 Cor. 11:6 seems to go the opposite direction: **εἰ δὲ καὶ ἰδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλ’ οὐ τῇ γνώσει, ἀλλ’ ἐν παντὶ φανερώσαντες ἐν πᾶσιν εἰς ὑμᾶς. I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you.**

But Paul may be using hyperbole here and adopting the side of his opponents for the sake of argument in regard to his oratorical skills. Clearly in his ‘boasting’ in chapters eleven through thirteen, he does not claim superior oratorical skills to his opponents. Rather he focuses on superior spiritual insights and more extensive suffering of abuse for preaching the Gospel as validation of God’s working in his ministry.

translate it well either. To be sure σάρξ stands in contrast to πνεῦμα for Paul. But σάρξ is the depraved human condition as lived out as a human in a physical manner.

In responding the apostle acknowledges that life lived out in the world is Ἐν σαρκί for certain. Even though redeemed as long as we physically live (βιωμεν) we live in a tainted body subject to temptation and sin. Only death at the end of our life frees us from this. This Paul acknowledges in the special way he sets up the contrast.

But what believers do not have to do is to fight for right with such human limitations. This is the central point of the main clause οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **not with the flesh do we fight**. The shift over to a military image underscores the seriousness of Paul's preaching the Gospel.¹⁰ Of course, physical violence is excluded by this statement, in spite of many of Paul's enemies resorting to physical violence against him (cf. 12:23-27). So far as we know, these were non-professing Christian enemies, often from the Jewish synagogue. A dependency upon human oratorical skills of persuasion are also excluded by Paul as he made clear in 1 Cor. 2:3-5.

In the label τὰ ὅπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν, **the weapons of our warfare**, no specific weapons are named. Instead, they are characterized first negatively and then positively: οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, **are not fleshly**

^{10.4} γὰρ
 200 τὰ ὅπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ (ἐστὶν)
 ἀλλὰ
 201 ----- δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ (ἐστὶν)
 πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων,

but powers of God.

The military background for ὄπλον, which is mostly used in the plural ὅπλα as here, denotes mainly siege instruments but was also a generalized term for 'weapons' that included spears, swords, siege engines et als. The term denoted weapons used in both offensive attack and defense. It is in Paul's writings where the term denotes spiritual weapons in a figurative use.¹¹

¹⁰“The depiction of the Christian life as a military operation (στρατεία, v. 4) is a common theme in Paul.⁶⁶ What is distinctive about 10:3–6 is (1) that the struggle is not simply ‘against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (Eph. 6:12) but in particular against his rivals at Corinth, and (2) that the military metaphor is sustained, using technical vocabulary drawn from siege warfare.⁶⁷” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 676.]

¹¹**Rom. 6:13** μηδὲ παριστάνετε τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν **ὄπλα ἀδικίας** τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ, ἀλλὰ παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς τῷ θεῷ ὡσεὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ζῶντας καὶ τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν **ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης** τῷ θεῷ. **No longer present your members as weapons of unrighteousness leading to**

The one NT use outside of Paul is in John 18:3 with the literal meaning of soldiers weapons. The depiction here in 10:4 gives more details than any of the other uses.¹²

The negative character asserts that the weapon, but present yourselves to God as those living out of death and your members as **weapons for righteousness to God**.

Rom. 13:12 ἡ νύξ προέκοψεν, ἡ δὲ ἡμέρα ἤγγικεν. ἀποθώμεθα οὖν τὰ ἔργα τοῦ σκότους, ἐνδυσώμεθα δὲ **τὰ ὅπλα τοῦ φωτός**. **The night is far spent. Therefore let us put aside the deeds of darkness and clothe ourselves with the weapons of light.**

2 Cor. 6:7 6 ἐν ἀγνότητι, ἐν γνώσει, ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ, ἐν χρηστότητι, ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ, ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀνυποκρίτῳ, 7 ἐν λόγῳ ἀληθείας, ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ· διὰ **τῶν ὀπλῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης** τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν, **by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; through the weapons of righteousness for right hands and left,**

2 Cor. 10:4 τὰ γὰρ **ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν** οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαίρουσιν, **for the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powers of God to bring down strongholds, by destroying arguments.**

¹²“In the NT and early Christian literature ὄπλον is always in the plur. (except at Barn., 12, 2) and it is always used in sense 3. (‘weapon’), lit. only in Jn. 18:3; Barn., 12, 2; Mart. Pol., 7, 1; Cl. Al. Strom., I, 24, 159, 3, otherwise fig., in the NT only in Paul. Paul repeatedly describes his missionary service as *militia Christi* (→ στρατιώτης). In 2 C. 10:4 he emphasises the efficacy of his weapons: τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων. The use of ὄπλα for

siege-engines, though not common, is understandable in view of the basic sense. In 2 C. 6:7 the stress is on moral blamelessness: διὰ (= with, → II, 66) τῶν ὀπλῶν τῆς δικαιοσύνης τῶν δεξιῶν καὶ ἀριστερῶν (weapons of offence and defence). But the *militia Christi* is the task of all the baptised. Hence the admonition: ‘Yield not your members as weapons² of unrighteousness (gen. qualitat- is = unrighteous weapons) unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God,’ R. 6:13. Cf. also R. 13:12: ‘Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on (on ἐνδύεσθαι τὰ ὄπλα → 293) the weapons³ of light,’ i.e., the weapons which are in keeping with the dawning day, cf. 1 Th. 5:8. The proximity of the parousia does not mean feeble peace but final conflict. This fig. use, though prepared in many ways → 293, is characteristic of the NT. The reference is not to the constant battle in the world between reason and what is unnatural, and on that ground immoral, though this may be found in Paul (1 C. 11:13 ff.). It is rather to the transcendental conflict between God and satanic powers, in which man is both passively and actively involved.” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:294.]

ons Paul uses are not οὐ σαρκικά, **not fleshly**. At the most basic level of meaning they are not human weapons, either literal weapons used by soldiers, nor figurative weapons such as human rhetoric etc. Implicit clearly in this is a criticism of the accusations against Paul being based on human standards of evaluation. Verse 7-11 amplify what Paul is getting at here.

202 λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες (ἐσμεν)
 10.5 καὶ
 πᾶν ὑψωμα
 | ἐπαιρόμενον
 | κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ,
 | καὶ
 203 αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα (ἐσμεν)
 10.6 εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
 καὶ
 ἐν ἐτοίμῳ
 204 (ἐσμεν) ἔχοντες
 ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν,
 ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή.

The positive character of his weapons is that they are δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ, **powers of God**. The possessive dative case use of τῷ θεῷ is unusual. In one sense, his depiction in Rom. 6:13 τὰ μέλη ὑμῶν ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ, **your members as weapons of righteousness to God**, underscores body parts like the tongue as instruments promoting righteousness to God's glory. Here, however, τὰ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν, denotes **weapons for planning and conducting warfare**. The apostle in ministry aggressively confronted false thinking as he found it in his world by presenting the Gospel of Christ as the exclusive solution to the human dilemma. This confrontation, although done with the tongue and the hand by speaking and writing, was saturated with divine power and leadership. And it was solely seeking to glorify God not any human.

The objective for using these weapons is πρὸς καθαίρειν ὀχυρωμάτων, **for the tearing down of strongholds**. This military image pictures the false thinking that Paul encountered in ministry as a well fortified fortress that needs to be destroyed. This one use of ὀχύρωμα inside the NT may very well play off the LXX use of it to **refer to the tower** of Babel (Gen. 11:3).¹³

¹³“ ὀχύρωμα is a military tt. for ‘fortified place.’ It is not used in a transf. sense in class. lit. or the pap.¹ But similar concepts are applied to God in the OT. Mostly the LXX brings out the theological point of comparison, καταφυγή for הַצִּיּוֹן in ψ 30:3; 70:3 (A ὀχύρωμα), for צִיּוֹן Ps. 9:9 (Σ ὀχυρωμα), ἰσχύς for יָד, Is. 49:5; Jer. 16:19; βοηθός for יָד ψ 27:7; 58:17. This method of transl. may be regarded as a concession to Greek modes of thought, which find such comparisons strange.² In three instances, however, the LXX has a fig. sense (as compared with 70 instances of the lit.): at 2 Βασ. 22:2 for הַצִּיּוֹן, at Job 19:6 for יָד, and with no Mas. requirement at Prv. 10:29 for יָד, cf. also ψ 70:3: τόπος ὀχυρός (Heb. uncertain). The ref. is always to God, not to men, as in 2 C. 10:4. On the other hand, there is a ref. to men in Philo Conf. Ling., 129 f., where in a striking linguistic par. and material approximation to Paul ὀχύρωμα denotes the tower of Babel (Gn. 11:3)³ or the tower at Penuel (Ju. 8:9), and vaunting reason is compared with this bastion: τὸ γὰρ κατεσκευασμένον ὀχύρωμα διὰ τῆς τῶς γόγων πιθανότητος οὐδενὸς ἔνεκα ἐτέρου κατεσκευάζετο ἢ τοῦ μετατραπῆναι καὶ μετακλιθῆναι διάνοιαν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ τιμῆς· οὐ τι ἂν γένοιτο ἀδικώτερον; ἀλλὰ πρὸς γε τὴν τοῦ ὀχυρώματος τούτου καθαίρειν ὁ πειρατῆς τῆς ἀδικίας καὶ φωνῶν αἰεὶ κατ’ αὐτῆς εὐτρέπισται ...

“It is possible that Paul, too, is alluding to the tower of Babel. At any rate his usage corresponds to the LXX. The comparison is

The participle phrases that follow --καθαιροῦντες, αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, and ἔχοντες (vv. 4b-6) amplify and define both the strongholds and the tearing them down by Paul's warfare. The one point that comes through clearly is that the 'strongholds' Paul sets out to tear down are thought / idea strongholds, not physical fortresses.¹⁴

The participles standing isolated from a regular verb as the connection base pose a grammar issue, particularly for modern western translators since the Koine Greek is doing something impossible to do in any modern western language grammatically. Modern grammars of ancient Greek will often speak of a Nominative Absolute construction. It is very doubtful that ancient Greek writers and readers would have thought this way. The most natural linkage in this expression is that the three nominative masculine plural participles go back to the first person plural regular verb στρατευόμεθα, **we wage warfare** in v. 3c. Yet the lengthy γὰρ in v. 4a-b stands between the verb and these participle modifiers. For translation this poses a significant barrier. The KJV and a few others place the γὰρ statement in parentheses as a solution. But this incorrectly de-emphasizes the grammatical role of this statement. The alternative is represented in the diagram on the left, but is not completely satisfactory either because the clear linkage to στρατευόμεθα is not fully emphasized either.

Another grammatical issue is the role πᾶν ὑψωμα. Clearly it is in a direct object function but of which participle? καθαιροῦντες, or αἰχμαλωτίζοντες? That is, is every obstacle being torn down or taken captive? The

designed to bring out the suitability of his spiritual weapons and the apparent strength of the philosophical structure (vv. 4ff.) and of the pretended repute of his opponents in Corinth (1f., 7ff.).”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 5:590–591.]

¹⁴This text, for example, provided no basis for western Christianity's crusades in the middle ages by reading strongholds as literal rather than as figurative. In the same way it provides no excuse for right wing extremism in the name of Christianity to burn down churches etc. that are different.

parallelism of πᾶν ὑψωμα with πᾶν νόημα is generally ignored by most commentators and results in πᾶν ὑψωμα being set up parallel to λογισμούς. Ultimately the difference in meaning between these two understandings is very little. My view is that the clear parallelism between πᾶν ὑψωμα and πᾶν νόημα links them together as the double direct object of αἰχμαλωτίζοντες.

When taken all together, the general sense of Paul's expression becomes clear. The three participle direct objects -- λογισμούς, πᾶν ὑψωμα, and πᾶν νόημα -- represent aspects of the ὀχυρωμάτων, **strong holds**, that Paul wages war against. They are λογισμούς, i.e., arguments or reasonings. The apostle stands fully prepared to shred all the counter arguments against the apostolic Gospel that he comes across, whether in the Jewish synagogue, in the Greek market place, or in house church groups inside the Christian community. The advocates see these as an ὀχύρωμα, **a fortress**, giving them religious security. But Paul is ready for καθαιρέω, the tearing down into destruction of all of these λογισμούς.

Also he is fully prepared for another ὀχύρωμα. He is committed to αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, **capturing**, πᾶν ὑψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, **every arrogant obstacle rising up against the knowledge of God**. The noun ὑψωμα literally is 'high thing.' As a military term, it is very close in meaning to ὀχύρωμα since most all fortresses in Paul's world were located on high points of ground. But it also often was an astronomical term referring to perceived deities etc. located above the earth in the religious thinking of that world. Plus in pure figurative use it was close to ἀλαζονεία, **arrogance / pride**. Both the Torah advocates in the synagogues and the philosophy advocates among the Greeks and Romans would have claimed superior knowledge and understanding to the foolishness (μωρία) of the Gospel (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18). But the apostle was ready to overrun in capture those falling prey to such thinking. They possessed no τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, **knowledge of God**, in spite of their claims. He was ready to take them captive for the Gospel.

Also another ὀχύρωμα was πᾶν νόημα, every thought / thinking. The range of meaning for νόημα is extensive and covers the idea of thought, but the process of thinking is covered, along with plans and intentions coming out of thinking. The word is used by Paul in 2 Cor. 2:11; 3:14; 4:4; 10:5; 11:3 in all of these meanings. The ὑψωμα, **arrogant place**, stands as the product of the νόημα, **thinking**, of such people. But the apostle is hunting out such false thinking and is fully prepared to take them / it captive εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **for obedience to Christ**. With the adjective modifier πᾶν added to both nouns it becomes clear that his intention is not just taking a few prisoners in his warfare, but to

take capture every one and all their thinking. He well knew that πίστις, **saving faith**, means total surrender to Christ. Achieving this objective was his plan and passion in preaching the Gospel message. And such a surrender means living in obedience to Christ.

This emphasis upon τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ, **obedience to Christ**, leads to the final ὀχύρωμα, that of πᾶσαν παρακοήν, **every disobedience**. This participle phrase builds off the previous two and centers on confronting an insider ὀχύρωμα. καὶ ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ ἔχοντες ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, ὅταν πληρωθῆ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή, **And in readiness possessing the willingness to punish every disobedience, whenever your obedience has reached fullness**. Idiomatic speech dominates here, and thus urges caution about precise meaning determination. The core expression ἐν ἐτοιμίῳ ἔχοντες... seems to be a probable Latinism equivalent to *in promptu habere*. The sense is *I am prepared to...*

Two key parts of it need primary attention first. What does he mean by ἐκδικῆσαι, **to punish**? Also, what is the nature of the qualification of this infinitive in the modifying indefinite temporal clause introduced by ὅταν?

The phrase ἐκδικῆσαι πᾶσαν παρακοήν, **to punish every disobedience**, is intriguing. Paul possessed no ecclesiastical powers enabling him to instigate any kind of punishment on anyone. His influence from example and teaching was the only leverage available to him. Clearly at Corinth, and generally in most of the Pauline churches, the individual house church groups possessed the ability to exclude from participation in the group anyone deemed a trouble maker.¹⁵ From the modern western hemisphere perspective of intensive individualism, the potency of exclusion is difficult to grasp adequately. But in the collective orientation of society rather universally in Paul's world, exclusion from participation took on powerful implications. In that world, one did not possess inherit worth. It was determined totally by the social connections the individual possessed. The harshest form of discipline then became exclusion from a group regarded as important.

¹⁵“διχοστασία. ‘Division,’ ‘disunity,’ ‘contention’: Hdt., V, 75; Plut. Aud. Poet., 4 (II, 20c). Esp. ‘political revolt’ or ‘party dissension’: Solon Fr., 3, 37 (Diehl, I, 24); Theogn., 78 (Diehl, I, 121). LXX, 1 Macc. 3:29: καὶ οἱ φορολόγοι τῆς χώρας ὀλίγοι χάριν τῆς διχοστασίας καὶ πληγῆς ἧς κατεσκεύασεν ἐν τῇ γῆ ...

“In the NT it signifies ‘objective disunity’ in the community. In R. 16:17 it occurs in connection with the σκάνδαλα περὶ τὴν διδασχὴν; in 1 C. 3:3 in B K alongside ζῆλος καὶ ἔρις = τὰ σχίσματα of 1:10; in Gl. 5:20 between ἐπιθεῖαι and αἰρέσεις to denote general parties within the church. Probably in these passages, too, διχοστασία has a limited ‘political’ sense. It is within the ἐκκλησία that διχοστασίαι arise.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 1:514.]

In 1 Cor. 5, Paul had demanded that an immoral member of the Corinthian community be excluded from participation. In 2 Cor. 2:5-11, the apostle urged the Corinthians to reinstate an offending member who had properly repented of his misdeeds. He focused attention not on himself or his supposed authority. But rather the focus was whether or not individuals were obeying Christ within the teachings of the apostolic Gospel. And it was ultimately up to the house church group and the unity it had with the other groups of believers in the region as to what action they would take. Paul's 'punishment' then was to use his influence with the group to exclude offending members at Corinth. And perhaps also the outsider missionaries who came with a corrupting message to Corinth (cf. 11:12-15). He was committed to helping them turn to Christ in complete obedience. To turn this into a modern day 'us vs. them' power play dynamic is to completely miss the point of Paul's words here.

What then does ὅταν πληρωθῇ ὑμῶν ἡ ὑπακοή imply? The indefinite temporal nature of the relative conjunction ὅταν (from ὅτε + ἄν) sets up an undefined time of compliance for the carrying out of his readiness to take disciplinary action. The antonyms παρακοήν, *disobedience*, and ὑπακοή, *obedience*, are critical here. Some commentators see in this contrast a clear signal that Paul's readiness to discipline is targeting only the outsider missionaries who will be punished once the wayward Corinthians have gotten their act together. But this doesn't work, since the discipline Paul is ready to take only includes urging the Corinthians to exclude individuals from participating. This corrupting influence must be in order for the Corinthians to come to full obedience to Christ. Far more likely is that the temporal subordinate clause doesn't mark off a future point in time for Corinthian obedience. Instead, it marks off what is essential for compliance that avoids disciplinary action. The apostle then asserts his willingness to work hard against every action of disobedience knowing that eliminating it is essential for gaining full obedience to Christ. His appeals in this letter are part of that opposition to disobedience. His approaching personal visit to Corinth will be another part of it (chap. 13). Then both in his writing and oral speaking directly to the Corinthian community he is fully prepared to oppose strongly every disobedient action he encounters. This is an important part of his στρατευόμεθα (v. 3), waging war against those opposing the Gospel of Christ.

b) Consistency, vv. 7-11

7 Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς. 8 ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσθωμι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν

ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι. 9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν· 10 ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησὶν, βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. 11 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἱοί ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ.

7 Look at what is before your eyes. If you are confident that you belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to Christ, so also do we. 8 Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For he says, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." 11 Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.

The apostle now builds off the previous point, especially in vv. 3-6, to assert his genuineness of commitment to Christ and calling to ministry. He does it very distinctly here and in confrontation with opponents in Corinth who are questioning Paul's Christian claims.¹⁶

The internal thought structure is built around the first two assertions (#s 205 & 206) followed by a defense of them (#s 207 & 208). A challenge first to all his readers (# 205) is followed by challenges to his opponents at Corinth (#s 206, 208).

The initial assertion in statement # 205 (v. 7a) can be taken grammatically three ways: a declaration, a question, or a command.¹⁷ The last option is preferable

¹⁶ "The Corinthians' preoccupation with outward appearances matched that of sophists concerned with proper and persuasive speech, but true philosophers constantly ridiculed this attitude (4:16-18). The more well-to-do members of the Corinthian church were enamored with Greek philosophy; Paul thus rebukes them on their own terms here." [Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 2 Co 10:7.]

¹⁷"Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. "Look at what is staring you in the face." In relation to its object, βλέπετε has been understood in three ways:

"1. As an indicative, expressing a question. 'Do you look to what can be seen outwardly (Bultmann 187)?'¹⁰⁵ Whether the clause is rendered this way, or, as Isaacs proposes in his paraphrase, 'Have you regard only for that which meets the eye?' the implied reproof may allude to 5:12 with its reference to those who pride themselves on appearances and externals.

"2. As an indicative, making a statement. 'You are looking at the outward appearance of things' (GNB),¹⁰⁶ again with a possible allusion to 5:12. The Corinthians' failure was that they had restricted vision, seeing only externals; they needed to look below the surface and see deeper realities. Their preoccupation with the confident claims of the Judaizing interlopers regarding their commendation from Jerusalem (cf. 3:1), their status as servants of Christ and of righteousness (11:15, 23), and their pure pedigree (11:22), needed to be replaced by sane judgment based on more adequate criteria for determining genuine apostleship. This interpretation

205 ^{10.7} **Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε.**

εἶ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι,
206 **τοῦτο λογιζέσθω**
| πάλιν
| ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
| καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ (ἐστὶν)
ὅτι...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς (ἐσμεν).

^{10.8} γὰρ
ἐάν τε περισσότερον τι καυχῆσωμαι
| περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν
| ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος
| εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
| καὶ
| οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν,

207 **οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι**

^{10.9} ἵνα μὴ δόξω
ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς
διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·
^{10.10} ὅτι...φησὶν,
αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν (εἰσὶν) βαρεῖαι
καὶ
ἰσχυραί,
δὲ
ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς
καὶ
ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).

208 ^{10.11} **τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος,**

| τῷ λόγῳ
| δι' ἐπιστολῶν
ὅτι οἷοί ἐσμεν...ἀπόντες,
καὶ
τοιοῦτοι (ἐσμεν) παρόντες
τῷ ἔργῳ.

because the second plural idiomatic usage of βλέπετε is uniformly the present imperative spelling of the verb elsewhere in Paul's writings. Its general nature also sets up the other two admonitions directed specifically to individual opponents at Corinth.

Both the indicative and interrogative understandings of the verb mood of βλέπετε require a meaning accords with the wider context but has one drawback. If Paul were contrasting how the Corinthians were viewing matters (v. 7a) with how they ought to be (v. 7b), an adversative such as ἀλλά might have been expected in v. 7b (cf. Héring 71).

“3. As an imperative. ‘Look at what is before your eyes’ (RSV, NRSV) or ‘Look facts in the face’ (NEB, REB).¹⁰⁷ Strong support for this view comes from the fact that the verbal form βλέπετε is always imperatival in Paul. Elsewhere it stands first in its clause,¹⁰⁸ but we may account for the unusual word order here by assuming that Paul wishes to emphasize the stark reality of the evidence confronting the Corinthians. This imperative may mean ‘Look at!’ ‘Notice!’ (BAGD 143d), or ‘Be alert to’ (Furnish 465).¹⁰⁹”

[Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 686–687.]

for Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον that is different and less likely. The sense becomes the outward things or appearances. This has to be understood against the backdrop of his accusation in 5:12 referring to some at Corinth τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ, **who are boasting of outward appearances rather than looking in the heart**. But the broader neuter plural Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον here rather than the masculine plural τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους (5:12), along with different prepositions, further argues for the consistent imperative use of the verb rather than either the declarative or interrogative use. The neuter gender form thus becomes literally: **look at the things in front of your face!**¹⁸ These things are

¹⁸The difference can perhaps be seen more clearly in the diagramming of the two expressions:

5:12, ἐν προσώπω
τοὺς...καυχωμένους
καὶ
----- μὴ (καυχωμένους)
ἐν καρδίᾳ

10:7

then defined in the following statements.

The second assertion in # 206 challenges individuals in opposition to Paul at Corinth to acknowledge that he knows the Lord just as well as they claim. Actually, the first person plural ἡμεῖς signals that the accusations were being leveled at Paul's associates along with him. The attempt was to discredit the apostolic Gospel in favor of a corrupt view of the teaching of Christ. Thus Paul and all associated with him were targets.

206 τοῦτο λογιζέσθω
 | πάλιν
 | ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ,
 | καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ (ἐστίν)
 ὅτι...οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς (ἐσμεν).

At this point Paul doesn't dismiss these people as phony Christians but rather comes at the issue from a different angle: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς. Let him calculate this again for himself, that just as he belongs to Christ so also do we. To his Corinthian critics he speaks individ-

10.8 γὰρ
 ἐάν τε περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι
 | περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν
 | ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος
 | εἰς οἰκοδομὴν
 | καὶ
 | οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν,
 207 οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι
 10.9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω
 ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς
 διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·
 10.10 ὅτι...φησίν,
 αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν...(εἰσὶν) βαρεῖαι
 καὶ
 ἰσχυραί,
 δὲ
 ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστίν) ἀσθενῆς
 καὶ
 ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστίν).

ually challenging them to acknowledge a second time, as they already have earlier (πάλιν), that Paul and his associates are true followers and messengers of Christ just as each critic claims to be. The first class conditional protasis εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ makes the assumption that the individual critics are claiming Christianity for themselves. Since they are clearly making this claim, the challenge is to reaffirm acknowledgment of Paul and his associates' Christian commitment just as they did earlier.

The ὅτι clause here in Greek has a multifaceted role that is impossible to preserve in English translation. Grammatically it stands as the antecedent to the demonstrative pronoun τοῦτο defining what the critic

is challenged to calculate (λογιζέσθω) for himself (ἐφ' ἑαυτοῦ). But the dominate causal role for ὅτι also allows it to state a foundational basis for the challenge to recalculate. This then becomes the key launch pad for the much more detailed causal expression introduced by the causal γὰρ (v. 8) that is found in vv. 8-10.¹⁹

8 ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν, ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, 9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν· 10 ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησίν, βαρεῖται καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος.²⁰

8 Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."

The NRSV translation above does what is neces-

¹⁹The incorrect placing of a period (major stop) after αἰσχυνθήσομαι by N-A 28th makes no sense whatsoever. Clearly the subordinate negative purpose clause introduced by ἵνα μὴ... modifies αἰσχυνθήσομαι, as is illustrated in the above [diagram of vv. 7-11](#). A comma should have been used (minor stop) instead. See the *SBL Greek New Testament* edition for the correct punctuation here.

²⁰The Greek text cited here is from Holmes, Michael W. *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition*. Lexham Press; Society of Biblical Literature, 2011–2013. This edition does a better job punctuating these expressions with modern punctuation marks. Remember that the original text composed in uncial letters had no punctuation indications of any kind. There were just unending rows of Greek capital uncial letters with no spaces between words or punctuation marks of any kind.

sary in translating, i.e., it breaks down the not overly long Greek sentence into three much shorter English sentences. Critical in such a translation process is to try to preserve as much as possible the inner connections of what is isolated out into a single English sentence to the rest of the single Greek sentence. Although some distortion occurs in this process here, it isn't nearly as bad as one often finds in Bible translations. The primary distortion occurs in maintaining proper balance between secondary and primary level idea expression contained in the original Greek sentence.²¹

The clear core affirmation as shown in the diagram is Paul's declaration οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι, **I will not be ashamed / embarrassed**. One must remember that Paul's assertion comes against the backdrop of the honor / shame cultural dynamic of his first century world.²² To be sure differing cultural dynamics across the Mediterranean world of the first century defined the content of both honor and shame by way of actions and appearances reflecting either and appropriate responses to these reflections.²³ Very few items would be held in

²¹English translations get away with this distortion in large part because English language readers typically are not trained to listen for this conceptual balance of thoughts. But in ancient Greek rhetoric this was a very important aspect of both public speaking and formal writing. The final revision of a written text before being released was the hardest and most time consuming, that of shifting around words and phrases in order to achieve the best rhetorical balancing of ideas possible.

²²"The binary pair 'honour and shame', or 'shame and guilt', familiar from anthropological studies, has begun to appear in interpretations of ancient literature with increasing frequency. Some important examples on literature from Classical Greece, for instance, include Dodds's chapter 'From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture' in his *The Greeks and the Irrational* (1951); Winkler's *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (1990); Fisher's *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greece* (1993); Gérard's *The Phaedra Syndrome: Of Shame and Guilt in Drama* (1993); and Cairns's *Aidôs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (1993). Biblical literature, too, has become a focus—especially since the 1990s. Particularly in interpretations of the New Testament and Apocrypha, both the pairing of shame with honour and the argument that the social structures described in modern Mediterranean field studies reach far back in time and are discernible in biblical texts, persist. With regard to the Hebrew Bible, the reception of anthropological evaluations has been moderately more reserved." [Johanna Stiebert, *The Construction of Shame in the Hebrew Bible: The Prophetic Contribution*, vol. 346, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (London; New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 29.]

²³"The honor-shame value complex was very much a part of the everyday lives of men and women in the ancient Mediterranean world. People found their places in society based upon factors such as status, gender, reputation, and their networks of associations. Moreover, there was very little social mobility. People of the higher classes generally remained there for their entire lives, enjoying the privilege that came with their social rank. Likewise, those among the lower classes normally lived out their lives within the

common across these cultures.²⁴ But at least two dynamics were universal in Paul's world.²⁵ The collective

confines of their station. Yet it was possible to challenge the criteria by which people were assigned their places in society. Specific groups could, so to speak, change the rules of the honor-shame game. Within a particular group, the common markers of high honor and status might be rejected in favor of new criteria. "[David F. Watson, *Honor among Christians: The Cultural Key to the Messianic Secret* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 64.]

²⁴For further study on this sociological dynamic in the ancient world see:

A. W. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); D. A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (SBLDS 152; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995a); idem, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000); idem, *The Hope of Glory: Honor Discourse and New Testament Interpretation* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999); idem, "Investigating Honor Discourse: Guidelines from Classical Rhetoricians," *SBLSP* 36 (1997) 491–525; idem, "The Noble Contest: Honor, Shame and the Rhetorical Strategy of 4 Maccabees," *JSP* 13 (1995b) 31–57; idem, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture," *CBQ* 58 (1996a) 433–55; idem, "Worthy of His Kingdom: Honor Discourse and Social Engineering in 1 Thessalonians," *JSNT* 64 (1996b) 49–79; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); B. J. Malina and J. H. Neyrey, "Conflict in Luke-Acts: Labeling and Deviance Theory," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991a) 97–124; idem, "Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World," in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, ed. J. H. Neyrey (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991b) 25–66; H. Moxnes, "Honor and Righteousness in Romans," *JSNT* 32 (1988b) 61–77; idem, "Honor and Shame," *BTB* 23 (1993) 167–76; idem, "Honor, Shame and the Outside World in Paul's Letter to the Romans," in *The Social World of Formative Christianity and Judaism*, ed. J. Neusner et al. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988a) 207–18; J. H. Neyrey, "Despising the Shame of the Cross: Honor and Shame in the Johannine Passion Narrative," *Semeia* 68 (1996) 113–37; idem, *Honor and Shame in the Gospel of Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998); idem, *2 Peter, Jude* (AB 37C; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993); J. Pitt-Rivers, "Honor and Social Status," in *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J. G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965) 21–77; B. Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1993).

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 521–522.]

²⁵"Greco-Roman manuals on rhetoric attest to the importance of honor and to the way an orator would play on the audience's desire for honor in order to achieve persuasion (deSilva 1995a; 1995b; 1999). An audience could be won to the orator's recommended course of action (deliberative rhetoric) if the orator demonstrated that it would lead to honor or to greater honor than

culture defined honor and shame by the society and not the individual.²⁶ The separate individual did not determine either what constituted these nor whether he or she might possess either honor or shame. One's status in any of the societies was powerfully determined by perceived honor and/or shame by the society.²⁷ Functioning as an alternative course being promoted by a rival (Aristotle Rhet. 1.9.35–36; Eth. Nic. 2.3.7; Quintilian Inst. Orat. 3.7.28; 3.8.1; Pseudo-Cicero Rhet. Ad Herenn 3.2.3). Conversely, showing how a certain course of action would result in dishonor created a strong deterrent. Another rhetorical genre, epideictic rhetoric, was associated with the praise and censure of particular individuals or groups. Orators reinforced society's values by holding up as praiseworthy those people who had exemplified a particular value. Hearing others praised—that is, honored—led the hearers to recommit themselves to the virtue or behavior that led to praise. Similarly, hearing some person censured or reproached would lead hearers to beware of falling into those behaviors that led to reproach and loss of honor. The two genres often work together, as orators, including the NT authors, use examples to illustrate the benefits of following or dangers of departing from the course they promote." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 519.]

26 "Honor refers to the public acknowledgment of a person's worth, granted on the basis of how fully that individual embodies qualities and behaviors valued by the group. First-century Mediterranean people were oriented from early childhood to seek honor and avoid disgrace, meaning that they would be sensitive to public recognition or reproach. Where different cultures with different values existed side by side, it became extremely important to insulate one's own group members against the desire for honor or avoidance of dishonor in the eyes of outsiders, since only by so doing could one remain wholly committed to the distinctive culture and values of the group. This struggle is particularly evident in the NT, as church leaders seek to affirm the honor of Christians on the basis of their adherence to Jesus while insulating them from the disapproval they face from non-Christian Jews and Gentiles alike." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 518.]

²⁷"The first-century Mediterranean was far from monolithic: within a dominant Romanized Hellenistic culture, one found the ethnic subculture of Judaism, philosophical schools and the Christian minority culture, among others. All of these groups defined what was honorable or dishonorable in different ways. Even if groups agreed that piety was an essential virtue and component of honor, different groups defined piety quite differently (respect for the traditional gods and the emperor; worship of the God of Israel through observance of Torah; worship of the God of Jews and Gentiles through obedience to Jesus). Even within groups, there would be differences (e.g., Paul's conflicts with Christian Judaizers).

"In such a world, it became essential to define carefully who constituted one's group of significant others—those people whose approval or disapproval mattered—and to insulate group members from concern about the honor or dishonor in which they were held by outsiders (Seneca Const. 13.2, 5; Epictetus Ench. 24.1; Moxnes 1993). If one seeks status in the eyes of the larger society, one will seek to maintain the values and fulfill the expectations of the dominant (pagan) culture. If one has been brought into a minority

tioning in shame would at minimum bring some level of exclusion from the society along with often very punitive physical punishments, e.g., the wife having her hand cut off because of trying to defend her husband a certain way (cf. Deut. 25:11-12).

To deny shame against a public accusation of it was complicated in Paul's world. This is exactly what the apostle is seeking to do here in 10:8-10. Both persuasive speech and appeal to what was already known about him were critical strategies in winning over his critics in the church at Corinth. Ancient Greek rhetoric had pretty much defined both the content and framing of persuasive speech for Paul's world outside Judea. To understand Paul then requires some awareness of what this was, especially because much of what was persuasive in Paul's day would not be considered so in modern western society.

Such an analysis must consider whether the speaker is speaking to definitions of honor and shame held by the minority group he is addressing. Or, whether he is affirming honor within the definition of honor by the larger society that he and his listeners belong to.²⁸ Also

culture (e.g., a philosophical school or a voluntary association like the early Christian community) or has been born into an ethnic subculture (such as Judaism), then one's adherence to the group's values and ideals will remain strong only if one redefines the constituency of one's circle of significant others. The court of reputation must be limited to group members, who will support the group values in their grants of honor and censure (Plato Cri. 46C–47D). Including some suprasocial entity in this group (e.g., God, reason or nature) offsets the minority (and therefore deviant) status of the group's opinion. The opinion of one's fellow group members is thus fortified by and anchored in a higher court of reputation, whose judgments are of greater importance and more lasting consequence than the opinion of the disapproving majority or the dominant culture (Plato Gorg. 526D–527A; Epictetus Diss. 1.30.1; Sir 2:15–17; 23:18–19; Wis 2:12–3:5; 4:16–5:8; 4 Macc 13:3, 17; 17:5). Both Greco-Roman philosophers and Jewish authors routinely point to the opinion of God as a support for the minority culture's values. Both admonish group members to remain committed to the group's values, for that is what God looks for and honors in a person." [D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 519–520.]

²⁸"Honor is depicted in the NT as the result of a life of loyalty to Jesus and obedience to his teachings and example (Mt 10:32–33; Jn 12:26; 2 Tim 4:7–8). Commitment and service to fellow believers (Mt 20:25–28), witnessing to the favor of God in Christ (Rev 20:4–6) and embodying the mind of Christ, which seeks the interest of others (Phil 2:5–11), are promoted as the path to honor. The approval of God and God's Messiah, typically announced at a last judgment but also affirmed in the present by early Christian authors, alone matters for the establishment of one's honor (Mt 25:14–46; 2 Cor 5:9–10). Believers are urged to encourage and honor one another as each embodies the attributes of Christian discipleship (Phil 2:29–30; 1 Thess 5:12–13; Heb 10:24–25) and are reminded frequently of the honor they have inherited as "chil-

is the speaker accepting definitions of honor held by his minority group listeners. Or, is he advocating new definitions of honor and shame to be adopted by his minority group listeners. Motivations for seeking honor and avoiding shame must be analyzed. In Paul's world, those motivations usually centered around gaining and/or avoiding the loss of personal power and wealth. That is, they tended to be particularly self serving for the individual rather than concerned for the welfare of the group. But such pretensions had to be cleverly disguised in the presentation.²⁹

dren of God" (Jn 1:12–13; Rom 8:14–17; Gal 3:26; Heb 2:10; 1 Jn 3:1–2) and "partners of Christ" (Heb 3:6, 14). They were called as well to honor their divine Patron and their Mediator in their lives (1 Cor 6:20) and to take care not to show contempt for the Giver by undervaluing the gift as this would result in their own dishonor before God's court (Heb 10:26–31).

"The Greco-Roman society frequently reacts against these communities, often informally by insulting, reproaching, abusing and harassing the Christians (Heb 10:32–34; 1 Pet 2:11–12; 4:1–4). These represent society's attempts to draw the believers back to a life in line with traditional Greco-Roman virtues (e.g., piety, expressions of civic loyalty through cult). Similar pressures could be brought to bear on Christian Jews by the synagogue (Jn 12:42–43; Acts 5:40–41; Rev 2:9). Christian authors, however, sought to insulate the believers from these attempts at shaming by presenting persecution as expected (Mt 10:24–25; 24:9–10; Jn 16:2–4; 1 Thess 3:3–4), as a contest in which an honorable victory may be won (Heb 12:1–4; Rev 2:26–28; 12:10–11) or as an imitation of the passion of Jesus that held the assurance of the same vindication Jesus enjoyed (Mt 5:11–12; Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 2:5–11; 3:10–11; 2 Tim 2:11–12; Heb 12:1–2; 1 Pet 3:18–22; 4:13–14). Close bonds between believers (e.g., as 'brothers and sisters') were essential, for relationships within the group had to be of greater importance for the individual than relationships outside the group. Exhortations directed at augmenting love, encouragement and support within the group (1 Thess 4:9–10; 5:11, 14; Heb 3:13; 10:24–25; 13:1–3) aim at making the Christian court of reputation stronger than the opinion of the outside world, so that individual believers might remain committed to the way of the cross."

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 521.]

²⁹"Where the values and commitments of a minority culture differ from those of a dominant or other alternative culture, members of that minority culture must be moved to disregard the opinion of nonmembers about their behavior (Seneca Const. 11.2–12.1; Epictetus Diss. 1.29.50–54). All groups will seek to use honor and disgrace to enforce the values of their particular culture, so each group must insulate its members from the pull of the opinion of nonmembers. Those who do not hold to the values and the construals of reality embodied in the group are excluded from the court of reputation as shameless or errant—approval or disapproval in their eyes must count for nothing, as it rests on error, and the representative of the minority culture can look forward to the vindication of his or her honor when the extent of that error is revealed (e.g., at a last judgment; 4 Macc 11:4–6; 12:11–13). When, for example, the dominant Greco-Roman culture holds a group like the Jews in contempt, the effect is a constant pressure upon individual Jews to give up their Jewishness and join in those behaviors that will then

Thus the contextual sense of οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι is **I will not be shamed** for talking about the authorization from God to ministry that I received. The third class protasis defines the point of potential shaming of Paul by his Corinthian opponents: ἐάν τε γὰρ περισσώτερόν τι καυχῆσωμαι περὶ τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἢς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεισιν ὑμῶν, **for if indeed I boast somewhat overly concerning our authorization which the Lord gave for building up and not for tearing you down.** The third class protasis in the conditional sentence in a polemical setting like here presents a hypothetical scenario as possible. Very wisely the ball is put in the court of his readers to decide whether he is boasting περισσώτερόν τι, **somewhat overly.** Also the framing of the potential point of shaming is presented in such a positive way that his opponents would be questioning God, if they sought to shame Paul.³⁰ Some evidently

be greeted as honorable by the members of the dominant culture. Jewish authors will urge their fellow Jews to set their hearts on the opinion of the congregation and the opinion of God and so be able to resist the pull of the Gentile world.

"Members of this clearly defined court of reputation must have frequent and meaningful interaction within the group. They must encourage one another to pursue group values and ideals and honor one another on that basis. Those who begin to show signs of slackening in their commitment to the values of the group out of a growing regard for the opinion of outsiders must be made to feel ashamed by the members of the group and thus pulled back from assimilation. Such people will need reminders that the realm outside the group is also outside the sphere of God's approval (Moxnes 1988). Encouragement within the group must outweigh the discouragement that comes to the individual from outside the group. Relationships within the group—the sense of connectedness and belonging so essential to the social being—must offset the sense of disconnectedness and alienation from the society that, in the case of converts, formerly provided one's primary reference group. The negative opinion of outsiders may even be transformed into a badge of honor within the group, often through the use of athletic metaphors: insult and abuse become a competition in which the minority culture's members must endure unto victory (4 Macc 16:16; 17:11–16; Heb 10:32). Group members are still encouraged to fulfill their desire for honor, but in terms of how the group defines honorable behavior. Thus Jews, for example, are encouraged to seek honor through obedience to Torah and enabled to resist the pressure exerted upon them by the dominant culture's contempt (Sir 10:19–24; 25:10–11; 41:6–8; deSilva 1996a)."

[D. A. deSilva, "Honor and Shame," ed. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, *Dictionary of New Testament Background: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 520–521.]

³⁰Against the backdrop of larger society values of honor and also minority group values of honor, Paul's critics at Corinth were claiming his lack of honor by his so-called weak physical presence when among them. This represents traditional Roman and Greek shaming values since honor values means a person in leadership must be strong, forceful, and very much in charge. For Paul to not come in with gang buster methods meant he was weak and lacking proper honor, from a secular Greek perspective. For him to then adopt the 'strong' stance just through his letters when not present

10.9 ἵνα μὴ δόξω

ὡς ἂν ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς

διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν·

10.10

ὅτι...φησίν,

αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν... (εἰσὶν) βαρεῖται

καὶ

ἰσχυραί,

δὲ

ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος (ἐστὶν) ἀσθενῆς

καὶ

ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος (ἐστὶν).

had questioned his divine calling and saw it only as destructive to them. But Paul insists that his divine calling was intended *εἰς οἰκοδομὴν καὶ οὐκ εἰς καθαίρεσιν ὑμῶν, for building up and not tearing you down*. God in no way authorized him to shut down churches by preaching the Gospel. Just the opposite. And past history in his ministry, even at Corinth, confirmed this even to his harshest critics. Plus this building up remains behind his words of exhortation and rebuke to them even in this letter.

The negative purpose clause in verse nine negates any shaming criticism about the blunt tone of his letters to them: *ἵνα μὴ δόξω ὡς ἂν³¹ ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς διὰ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν, lest I seem as though frightening you through the letters*.

The key here is the infinitive ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς, *to be frightening you*.³² The verb ἐκφοβέω is only used here in the NT, and the parallel adjective form ἐκφοβος, -ον is

among them represented great shaming of himself in their eyes. Such destroyed any credibility he had when present among them -- at least in their thinking. At minimum it exposed insistency and thus negated any honoring of him.

The apostle vigorously attacks this system of honoring and shaming by contending it doesn't understand what he is seeking to achieve both in the letters and also in the personal visits. A completely new set of honor/shame values must be adopted by the minority Christian group at Corinth. And the core value principle of evaluating honor / shame must revolve around whether Paul was carrying out his divine authorization (τῆς ἐξουσίας ἡμῶν ἧς ἔδωκεν ὁ κύριος) for ministry properly both in his letters and in his visits. Note that the first plural 'our' includes his associates in this process as well.

³¹“ὡς ἂν, sometimes written ὡσάν, may be translated in any one of three ways: ‘as if,’ where ἂν probably = ἑάν (Robertson 959), ‘as it were’ (Moulton 167), or ‘so to speak’ (Thrall 597). The expression should be construed with ἐκφοβεῖν ὑμᾶς, toning down the effect of that strong verb, ‘to be trying to scare you to death,¹⁵⁴ so to speak,’ rather than with δόξω, ‘give the appearance as it were.’¹⁵⁵” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 696.]

³²“ἐκφοβέω *einschüchtern; erschrecken*
ἐκφοβος, ον *erschreckt; verstört*”

Rudolf Kassühlke and Barclay M. Newman, *Kleines Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament: Griechisch-Deutsch* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997), 59.]

not used by Paul (2x in NT: Mk. 9:6 and Heb. 12:21).³³ The sense is of intense fright and/or shock.³⁴ Paul disavows the use of ‘shock therapy’ of any kind in order to get the Corinthians to obey Christ. That is, a true servant of God does not try to scare people into serving God! His bluntness in his letters is not intended to frighten but to lay the bare truth on the table before the Corinthians. The spiritual shift from the apostolic Gospel to the twisted teaching of his opponents was far greater and dangerous than his readers understood. He would have been less than honest to have not called this to their attention. Add to that the dynamism of the issues being treated from the time of his last visits to the writing of the letters³⁵ necessitated different response em-

³³“ἐκφοβεῖν is a NT hapax legomenon although it is not uncommon in the LXX (fourteen uses) where on six occasions it is found in the stylized phrase οὐκ ἔσται ὁ ἐκφοβῶν, ‘no one will terrify you.’¹⁵³ The prefix ἐκ- may have a causative force (Robertson 597), ‘cause to be afraid,’ ‘frighten,’ but more probably it is intensive, ‘terrify’ or ‘frighten to distraction’ (Hughes 361 n. 17), ‘scare to death’ (Furnish 468). In this case the rendering ‘overawe’ (TCNT, Moffatt, Cassirer) or ‘intimidate’ (NAB1; Thrall 597) is perhaps too mild.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 695–696.]

³⁴“ἐκφοβέω 1 aor. ἐξεφόβησα; pf. pass. ptc. ἐκπεφοβημένος LXX (s. φοβέομαι and next entry; Trag., Thu. et al.; PLond II, 342, 9 p. 174 [185 A.D.]; Sb 4284, 10 ἐκφοβῶν ἡμᾶς; LXX; En; TestAbr A 16 p. 97, 5 [Stone p. 42]; Jos., Bell. 1, 492, Ant. 2, 82) **to cause to be intensely afraid, frighten, terrify** τινὰ διὰ τινος someone w. someth. **2 Cor 10:9**.—DELG s.v. φόβομαι II. M-M.

ἐκφοβος, ον **pert. to being intensely afraid, terrified** (s. ἐκφοβέω; Aristot., Physiogn. 6 p. 812b, 29; Plut., Fab. 178 [6, 8]) ἐκφοβοὶ ἐγένοντο they became terrified **Mk 9:6**; w. ἔντρομος **Hb 12:21** (cp. Dt 9:19).—S. Frisk s.v. φόβομαι. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 312.]

³⁵“The letters referred to in vv. 9 and 10 could include the ‘previous letter’ of 1 Cor. 5:9, 11 and 1 Corinthians itself, but the main allusion will be to the ‘severe letter’ mentioned in 2 Cor. 2:3–4; 7:12 with its apparent demand for the summary punishment of the offending church member.¹⁶⁵⁷” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI;

phases.

The subordinate causal clause introduced by ὅτι provides most naturally an explanation for his not wanting to frighten the Corinthians.³⁶ The core ὅτι...φησίν, *because...he is saying*, alludes to the criticism of his Corinthian opponents, perhaps echoing that of his outsider critics. Very unlikely in my opinion is the nebulous “man sagt” or “it is said.”³⁷ The third plural alternative reading φάσαν certainly points to an early understanding of it referencing his opponents.³⁸ The third singular φησίν maintains the consistent reference to his opposition ὁ τοιοῦτος, such a person, in v. 11. That he has a group of people in mind is clear from τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, *some of those commending themselves* (v. 12) and τινὰς τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς, *some evaluating us* (v. 2). The third singular focuses on a single voice for the critics. Whether a spokesman for this group is envisioned by the singular form cannot be determined. Also undefined is whether the ultimate source of the criticism comes from within the Corinthian community, or from the outside false teachers who had come to Corinth. It was, however, being voiced against Paul from the Corinthian opponents.

What was the criticism? The content of the ὅτι clause defines it in fair detail: ὅτι αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ μὲν, φησίν, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, ἡ δὲ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος. *His letters, on the one hand, they say, are weighty and strong, but on the other hand his physical presence is weak and his message is contemptible.*

This more detailed expression repeats the shorter

Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 698.]

³⁶The ὅτι could possibly link back to δόξω or οὐκ αἰσχυροθήσομαι, but most naturally in the grammar the closest possible modifying candidate is the best choice.

³⁷“The singular verb (φησίν) could point to the allegation of an imaginary objector, in the tradition of the ‘diatribe’;¹⁶⁶ thus ‘Someone will say’ (GNB). Paul is certainly capable of creating a lengthy and detailed theological objection to be answered (see, e.g., Rom. 3:7), but it seems inconceivable that he would provide such a convenient tool of self-disparagement for his antagonists to use against him, when he normally avoids citing the criticism of his detractors verbatim, lest the very repetition of a charge should actually reinforce it. Rather, φησίν may bear an impersonal sense, ‘it is said’ (NEB, REB; Furnish 468) like the German ‘sagt man’ (Wendland 229; de Boor 202) or the French “dit-on” (Carrez 201), or refer to Paul’s critics in general, both Corinthians and intruders, as represented by a particular spokesman (B reads φασίν; see Textual Note i.); thus ‘to quote my opponents’ (Barclay) or ‘some are saying’.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 698.]

³⁸φασιν B lat sy

| – P^{46vid} 1881 b bo^{ms}; Ambst

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 571.]

stating in v. 1, ὃς κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, *who am humble face to face with you but when absent am bold toward you*. The contrast between ταπεινὸς and θαρρῶ now is framed βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί along with ἀσθενῆς and ἐξουθενημένος. Also κατὰ πρόσωπον, *face to face*, becomes ἡ δὲ παρουσία, *his presence*, and ὁ λόγος, *his speaking*. Then ἀπὼν, *although not present*, becomes αἱ ἐπιστολαί, *his letters*.³⁹

The thoughts are framed around the dual contrasts of μὲν and δέ. The second side is then stated in a two-fold manner with καὶ linking them, as illustrated in the above diagram. It attacks both Paul’s physical appearance and his speaking skills. One should also note the sarcastic tone to the ‘complementary’ statement about his letters. This is intended only to heighten the inconsistency between physical presence and writing while not present. Note the ellipsis in omitting verbs in order to heighten the criticism.

His letters: αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, his letters weighty and strong. In 10:1 the introductory depiction stressed boldness: ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς, *but when absent I am bold toward you*. The verb θαρρέω (often in the alternative spelling θαρσέω) stresses being confident in what one believes and expresses. In the subsequent statement of 10:2, it denotes willingness to be confrontational against those with opposing views. In this, he alludes to the ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, *as living according to flesh*, standards as a definitional benchmark for defining courage especially by his opponents. His Corinthian opponents were using worldly standards in

³⁹Charted out, it looks like this:

	Presence:	Absence:
v. 1	κατὰ πρόσωπον μὲν ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν,	ἀπὼν δὲ θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς
v. 10	δὲ ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενῆς καὶ ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος	μὲν αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί

Note the informal chiasmus present here:

- A Presence (1a): κατὰ πρόσωπον
- B Absence (1b): ἀπὼν
- B’ Absence (10a): αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ
- A Presence (10b): ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος

Such a thought construct is a very Jewish kind of ancient thinking. It does focus attention on his ability to speak forcefully through his letters.

The use of γὰρ in vv. 3-6 and vv. 12-18 to defend and amplify functions rhetorically the same way each time. He attacks the criticism and then defends his attacks. Clearly it is powerful rhetoric. But in the summary statement of v. 11 Paul asserts the ability, if needed, to be just as blunt and direct in person as he is in his writings.

evaluating his courage (τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς).

But in the more detailed depiction in 10:10, it is his αἱ ἐπιστολαὶ, letters, that are judged βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, *weighty and strong*. What does this mean? Is this what 2 Peter 3:15-16 was alluding to?⁴⁰ In Paul's letters there are ἐν αἷς ἔστιν δυσνόητά τινα, *some things that are hard to understand*.⁴¹ Does this imply obscurity in writing? The church father [Origen](#), writing in a period in the early 200s when Paul was not highly popular in Christian circles, thought so.⁴² He felt that the apostle was incapable of expressing his ideas clearly and thus his writings always required the expert interpretation of later scholars when being read. But this is a virtually impossible view to defend. The adjectives used in 10:10, βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, point the opposite direction and they come from opponents at the time. They are consistent with the more generalized θαρρῶ εἰς ὑμᾶς in 10:1, also reflecting an opposition viewpoint. Second Peter's observation that ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλώσουσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν, *which the uninstructed and unstable twist to their own destruction like they also do the other writings*, assumes an understanding of Paul's words but a clear rejection of their proper meaning. Thus the sense of δυσνόητά is more *hard to accept* than *hard to understand*. And it is applied only to some of his writings in the statement: ἐν

⁴⁰**Pet. 3:15-16.** 15 καὶ τὴν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν μακροθυμίαν σωτηρίαν ἠγεῖσθε, καθὼς καὶ ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφὸς Παῦλος κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν ἔγραψεν ὑμῖν, 16 ὡς καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς λαλῶν ἐν αὐταῖς περὶ τούτων ἐν αἷς ἔστιν δυσνόητά τινα ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλώσουσιν ὡς καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν.

15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other writings.

⁴¹“δυσνόητά τινα ἃ οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι στρεβλοῦσιν, ‘some things that are hard to understand, which the uninstructed and unstable people distort.’ δυσνόητος (‘hard to understand’) is a rare word, used of texts which are difficult to interpret (Diogenes Laertes, Vit. Phil. 9.13) and by Hermas of his symbolic visions (Herm. Sim. 9:14:4). It is no qualification of Paul's ‘wisdom’ (v 15) to admit that Paul's writings contain difficult passages, since it is only the ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι (‘uninstructed and unstable people’) who will be liable to misinterpret them, and they also misinterpret the ‘other scriptures’ (see below; cf. Lindemann, Paulus, 94). The reference is probably therefore to passages which are liable to be misunderstood unless they are interpreted in the light of the rest of Paul's teaching and of the apostolic teaching generally, rather than to passages which are simply obscure. (The point is therefore different from that made by Origen, *Comm. in. Rom. 6*, who attributes the variety of interpretations of Paul to the fact that he was unable to express himself clearly.) For the correct interpretation of such passages some instruction in Christian teaching is required.” [Richard J. Bauckham, *2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 50, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1998), 331.]

⁴²This view was expressed in his commentary on Romans 6.

αἷς...τινα. That is, the demands for commitment made by Paul in some of his writings go well beyond what most Christians want to accept as required of God. But to twist them (στρεβλώσουσιν) with watered down false meanings brings destruction to such an interpreter.

At this point, the idea in Second Peter intersects the situation in Corinth in that false meaning, or at least improper motivation, is given to Paul's words by some at Corinth. This then prompts the twin sets of γὰρ amplifications in vv. 3-6 and 12-18 defending what and why he did what he did when both present and speaking, as well as when absent and writing. The Corinthian opponents who sought to drive a wedge between Paul's being absent and present are challenged as at least among οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι, *the uninstructed and unstable*, spoken of in Second Peter. Their Greek culturalized version of the gospel was not legitimate.

His appearance: ἡ παρουσία τοῦ σώματος ἀσθενής, his physical presence weak. The genitive case modifier τοῦ σώματος defines ἡ παρουσία as his *physical presence*. Also it amplifies κατὰ πρόσωπον, *face to face*, in 10:1. What is intended by this? Very likely it centers on his physical appearance as not being up to par within the definitions of that of a Greek or Roman leader. To be sure, later church tradition⁴³ paints the apostle's physical appearance as being woefully poor due to abnormal shortness of height, and ongoing deformities from diseases that he suffered (perhaps alluded to in Gal. 4:13-14⁴⁴). But with the twofold negative assessment of Paul's presence, also to be included is what would be labeled in our world as his *personae*. The assessment of it being ἀσθενής, *weak*, would certainly cover not just physical weakness but personality weakness as well.⁴⁵

⁴³For example, here is one illustration: “And he saw Paul coming, a man little of stature, thin-haired upon the head, crooked in the legs, of good state of body, with eyebrows joining, and nose somewhat hooked, full of grace: for sometimes he appeared like a man, and sometimes he had the face of an angel.” [*Acts of Paul and Thecla*, [earlychristianwritings.com](#).]

⁴⁴**Gal. 4:13-14.** 13 οἴδατε δὲ ὅτι δι' ἀσθένειαν τῆς σαρκὸς εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν τὸ πρότερον, 14 καὶ τὸν πειρασμὸν ὑμῶν ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου οὐκ ἐξουθενήσατε οὐδὲ ἐξεπτύσατε, ἀλλ' ὡς ἄγγελον θεοῦ ἐδέξασθέ με, ὡς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus.

⁴⁵“The other prejudicial side to this tribute is that the report offsets the power of his letters by an adverse comment on his physical presence (παρουσία) and his abilities of public speech (λόγος). The former is branded as ἀσθενής, ‘weak,’ probably including the sense of being sickly and infirm, retiring in the face of vigorous opposition.¹²² But this view of ἀσθενής, ‘weak,’ is not exclusively or primarily so, as Betz shows.¹²³ The latter argues that what is in mind is Paul's ταπεινός, ‘humiliatingly poor,’ appearance as deficient in those essential traits of the gnostic πνευματικός, ‘spiritual one,’ namely, δύναμις, ‘power,’ ἐξουσία, ‘rights to be exercised,’

He was not a powerful orator when speaking.⁴⁶ This would clearly fit the ταπεινὸς ἐν ὑμῖν, *humble among you*, in 10:1. Note how Luke contrasts Apollos as having most of the oratorical traits that Paul is accused of not having.⁴⁷ The successful leader in Greco-Roman traditions needed to be virtually the opposite of what is ascribed to Paul.⁴⁸ This cultural heritage evidently shaped a negative view of Paul in the minds of some in the church at Corinth.

His message: ὁ λόγος ἐξουθενημένος, his speaking contemptible. This second negative assessment of his physical presence centers on his speaking skills, or **lack thereof in the opinion of his critics. The very wide-**replete with ἀπόδειξις, ‘demonstration,’ and λόγος, ‘rhetorical skill.’ Above all, Paul lacked ἀρετή, ‘divine power,’¹²⁴ and πνεῦμα, ‘spirit,’ thought of as a dynamic and impressive force to convey powerfully the triumph and effectiveness of his message. They charged that Paul was, by contrast, ιδιώτης, ‘incapable of pneumatic speech,’ i.e., glossolalia (11:6)¹²⁵ or rhetorical finesse; and perhaps, if we return to the witness of 12:1–10, he was unable to heal himself of the malady that rendered him so weak.¹²⁶ [Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 494–495.]

⁴⁶**1 Cor. 2:1-5.** 2.1 Κάγῳ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ’ ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κάγῳ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖς σοφίας λόγοις ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ’ ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

⁴⁷**Acts 18:24-26.** 24 Ἰουδαῖος δὲ τις Ἀπολλῶς ὀνόματι, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς τῷ γένει, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, κατήνησεν εἰς Ἔφεσον, δυνατὸς ὢν ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς. 25 οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ ζέων τῷ πνεύματι ἐλάλει καὶ ἐδίδασκεν ἀκριβῶς τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐπιστάμενος μόνον τὸ βάπτισμα Ἰωάννου· 26 οὗτός τε ἤρξατο παρρησιάζεσθαι ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ. ἀκούσαντες δὲ αὐτοῦ Πρίσκιλλα καὶ Ἀκύλας προσελάβοντο αὐτὸν καὶ ἀκριβέστερον αὐτῷ ἐξέθεντο τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ θεοῦ.

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately.

⁴⁸The modern image of a successful preacher is largely shaped by the American TV preachers. Can you image any of them succeeding if they dressed in cheap clothes, didn’t wear layers of TV makeup, and were deformed in some visual way by illness? Both Paul and Jesus wouldn’t get to first base on the American scene.

ly used word ὁ λόγος carried many different meanings across the ancient Greek speaking world. When used in regard to the act of oral speaking, the meaning usually captured both how the speaking was done and the content of what was spoken. We struggle in English to find a single word that can gather up both these meanings. The word ‘speaking’ is somewhat neutral and can go either direction but not usually both at the same time.

The very negative trait attributed to ὁ λόγος here is ἐξουθενημένος. Stated not in adjectival form but as a perfect tense passive participle in a predicate adjective role, the trait has a particularly stinging bite built into it. Taken from the verb ἐξουθενέω / ἐξουθενόω, the meaning is very strong: “to despise someone or something on the basis that it is worthless or of no value—‘to despise.’ ὅτι εἰσὶν δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξουθενοῦντας τοὺς λοιποὺς ‘and they were righteous and despised everyone else’ Lk 18:9; ὁ ἐσθίων τὸν μὴ ἐσθίοντα μὴ ἐξουθενείτω ‘the one who eats should not despise the one who does not eat’ Ro 14:3.”⁴⁹ It is used 11 times inside the NT designating both people and things often scorned or despised. In this context here the sense captures the λόγος of Paul as both not worth listening to both due to his inept speaking ability and to the utter lack of content in his speaking. The perfect tense participle intensifies this disdain greatly.⁵⁰

208¹⁰⁻¹¹ τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος,
 | τῷ λόγῳ
 | δι’ ἐπιστολῶν
 ὅτι οἳ εἰσὶν ἐσθίοντες... ἀπόντες,
 καὶ
 τοιοῦτοι (ἐσθίοντες) παρόντες
 τῷ ἔργῳ.

In the summary statement of verse 11, the apostle sets out his core rebuttal: τοῦτο λογιζέσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἳ εἰσὶν ἐσθίοντες τῷ λόγῳ δι’ ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ. *Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.*

His opponents have been doing some ‘calculating’ (τοὺς λογιζομένους) in order to criticize Paul and his associates (v. 1). Now in using the third singular (ὁ τοιοῦτος) to reach back to each critic he challenges them to do some more ‘calculating’ (λογιζέσθω; v. 11). But this time to calculate things correctly. His weighty and strong (βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραὶ) written words will turn into weighty and strong oral words and actions when he arrives at Corinth: ὅτι οἳ εἰσὶν ἐσθίοντες τῷ λόγῳ δι’ ἐπιστολῶν

⁴⁹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 1:762.

⁵⁰Don’t forget that this is Paul depicting what his opponents were saying about him. The very highly insulting nature of this accusation reflects the apostle’s honesty in reporting their accusations and then facing them in equally strong rebuttal.

ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ. This they need to understand.

The correlative adjective function of τοιοῦτος, -αύτη, -οῦτον / -οῦτο with the masculine singular ὁ τοιοῦτος here alludes back to the person in φησὶν, he says, in v. 10. That is, 'such a one who says such things against me.' The demonstrative τοῦτο, this, anticipates its antecedent in the subsequent ὅτι clause, rather than reaching back to something said before. The neuter singular form is appropriate to a phrase or clause rather than a single word standing as the antecedent of a pronoun. The correlative pronoun τοιοῦτοι, such things, reaches back to the relative οἷοί, what. The masculine gender is used with both pronouns in drawing from ὁ λόγος in a plural summation of Paul's words as οἱ λόγοι. It alludes to Paul speaking both through writing (δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες) and in deeds (παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ). The contrastive elements are ἀπόντες, words spoken while absent, and παρόντες, words spoken while present. The further contrast τῷ λόγῳ, by word, and τῷ ἔργῳ, by deed, underscores the inclusiveness of Paul's strategy.

Everything he says and does, whether through writing or through personal presence, has the fundamental consistency of βαρεῖαι καὶ ἰσχυραί, weightiness and strength. But this weightiness and strength is by God's standards and not by human standards (cf. v. 4). Thus on some occasions his physical presence may not have appeared strong and forceful, but only if measured by human standards. In following God's leadership this is a time to be forceful and also a time to be mild. It all depends upon the needs of each situation. Following divine direction in each situation is always weighty and strong.

In vv. 4-6, he explained that his warfare was not fought with human weapons. That is, he was acutely aware that the struggle was not over personalities and loyalties to human beings. It instead was a struggle against the powers of evil originating with the devil himself and ultimately it was God's battles that were being fought. Beginning in vv. 12-18 that explanation will be expanded even further. Thus he will limit his 'boasting' (καυχησόμεθα) to appropriate boundaries rather than indulge into human standards (ὡς κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας, v. 2b).

10.2.3.3.1.2 Limits of boasting, 10:12-18

12 Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοῦς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιάσιν. 13 ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. 14 οὐ γὰρ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοῦς, ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες ἀξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελισασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι. 17 Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω. 18 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν.

12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you. 14 For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action. 17 "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 18 For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

The literary contextual role for vv. 12-18 is to provide a series of justifications for Paul's position articulated in vv. 7-11. This is signaled clearly by the repeated use of γὰρ in these verses, cf. statements #s 209, 213, 214, and 216 in the above diagram. Also vv. 12-18 should be seen as a continuation of the justifications set forth in vv. 3-6 as well. In this initial section the reasons for his actions are broadly defined religiously with a claim for their effectiveness in countering every opponent to God.

The justification strategy in 12-18 then amplifies the different standards of measuring used by the apostle from those used by his Corinthian opponents. In statement #s 209 and 210 (two Greek short sentences) the apostle rejects the worldly standards of measuring oneself against what others are doing. Then in the third sentence (vv. 14-16) in statements #s 213 - 214, he defines proper measurement by God's standards. Statements #s 215 - 217 (vv. 17-18) form the fourth sentence that challenges everyone to use God's standards (# 215) because the only approval that counts is from God (#s 216 - 217). This is the bottom line reason for his use of these different measuring standards. And this assertion will provide the conceptual foundation for the next major segment in 11:1 - 12:13.⁵¹

⁵¹This inter connectivity between units of idea expression are so typical of the former Jewish Pharisee trained in scribal patterns of thinking. The following unit builds off the preceding unit in some particular manner. Sometimes the nature of this connectivity is signaled overtly by coordinate conjunctions such as γὰρ, but at

The four Greek sentences in vv. 12-18 (vv. 12-13; 14-16; 17-18) provide the most natural internal organizing structure for understanding what Paul is saying. They provide three clearly defined reasons for Paul's different approach to the Corinthians in his writing and in his personal presence with them. Also they completely evaporate the basis for his critics in Corinth speaking against him. At the close in v. 18 comes the base line reason behind Paul's strategy: God's approval is the only one that ultimately matters.

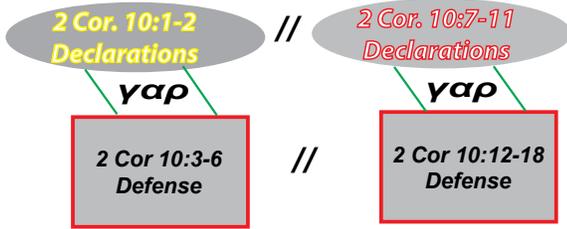
a) Not worldly based comparisons, vv. 12-13. 12 Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιᾶσιν. 13 ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. 12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.

In this first subunit of defense Paul disavows the use of worldly standards of comparison that his opponents are using (v. 12). But he comes right back to claim a legitimate basis for boasting that is established by God and not by humans (v. 13).

Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων. The core verb expression Οὐ τολμῶμεν sets the tone and continues in elaboration the disavowal of human standards mentioned in vv. 3-6. What did he mean by οὐ κατὰ σάρκα στρατευόμεθα, **not according to fleshly standards do we wage war**, in v. 3? In v. 12, we know one key component of those human standards: measuring our achievements over against those of other preachers. Paul states that he and his associ-

209	10.12	γὰρ Οὐ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, ἀλλ' ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοὺς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοὺς ἑαυτοῖς αὐτοὶ...οὐ συνιᾶσιν.
211	10.13	δὲ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα ἡμεῖς οὐκ...καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ (ἡμεῖς καυχησόμεθα) κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν.
213	10.14	γὰρ οὐ ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτοὺς, γὰρ ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν
214	10.15	ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, δὲ ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν
216	10.16	εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι.
215	10.17	δὲ Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·
216	10.18	γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, οὐ...ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν (ἐστιν δόκιμος).

ates (first person plural verb) dare not do that! Not the compound complementary infinitive objects of the verb τολμῶμεν with ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς..., to evalu-



Just as the opening declarations in vv. 1-2 are then defended and amplified in vv. 3-6, so also the declarations in vv. 7-11 are defended and amplified in vv. 12-18. The two sets of declarations/justifications stand parallel to one another as an combined assertion of Paul's differing strategies when either present or away from Corinth. Together these form a powerful response to criticism against him by some in the Corinthian church.

as τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, of commending themselves reaches back to 5:12 (cf. also 3:1; 4:2; 6:4; 7:11; 10:18; 12:11), where Paul indicates avoidance of such actions.⁵⁵ The idea of συνίστημι here is of setting oneself in front of another so they can recognize validity. This is not in itself wrong as the other uses of συνίστημι in Second Corinthians reflect. But here in chapter ten the setting of one's credentials before the gathered church groups was done by stressing one's superiority to others by questioning the values of one's opponents. This Paul rejects. Neither he nor Titus or any other of his associates will claim exceptional achievements over those of the opponents at the Corinthian church. He refuses to play the game of 'one upmanship'!⁵⁶ This is not God's way of credentializing one of His servants.

Instead (= ἀλλ'), as statement # 210 (v. 12b) as-

^{10.12} γὰρ
209 Οὐ τολμῶμεν
ἐγκρίναι
ἢ
συγκρίναι ἑαυτοῦς
τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων,
ἀλλ'
ἐν ἑαυτοῖς
ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες
καὶ
συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς
210 αὐτοῖ...οὐ συνιᾶσιν.

ate or compare ourselves with.... The play on κρίνω, to judge, with the compound forms ἐγκρίναι from ἐν + κρίνω and συγκρίναι from σύν + κρίνω dramatically underscores comparing two individuals with drawing conclusions about who is the better or worse of the two. Here the two sets of comparisons are ἑαυτοῦς, ourselves, and τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων, someone of those who are commending themselves.⁵² Note the continued use of the singular number form first in τις (v. 7), then φησὶν (v. 10), and ὁ τοιοῦτος (v. 11). This particularizes the plural use τινος, some (v. 2).⁵³ This heightened stress on anyone daring to make such comparisons emphasizes the wrongness of such actions.⁵⁴ The label of this opponent

⁵²Perhaps there is a subtle tone of forcefulness in the plural 'we' against the singular 'someone' among the opponents. Rhetoric would utilize every potential nuance of persuasion possible.

⁵³Most English translations uniformly use the plural 'some' for the sake of clarity of identifying contextually who is being referenced as opponents. But in the second tier of assertion and defense (vv. 7-18) the plural reference in the first (vv. 1-6) becomes individualized for emphasis sake.

There was no need for Paul to name by name any of these individuals. Their egocentric self commendation would have exposed their identity to the readers of this letter. Besides Paul was attacking worldly ways not people in this.

⁵⁴His tactic is to adopt a stance of mock humility: I really cannot rise to the level of these people so that I can rightly join myself to them (ἐγκρίνω) or compare myself with them (συγκρίνω). With an obvious play on words, which may owe something to an anti-rhetorical and anti-sophistic posture—opposing comparison

serts, engaging in such comparisons shows lack of judgment and good sense: ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς οὐ συνιᾶσιν. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. Here we discover some more about how his opponents were making the comparisons, as well as Paul's assessment of such actions.

The actions of his opponents are described as ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑαυτοῦς μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες ἑαυτοῦς ἑαυτοῖς, among themselves measuring themselves and

(σύγκρισις) with a denial of superiority (ὑπεροχή; cf. 1 Cor 2:1) adopted by popular philosophy,⁵⁵ Paul answers those who said that he was boastful (3:1; 10:1). In the game of self-praise, he retorts, I haven't the skill to play (see 11:6: ιδιώτης τῷ λόγῳ, 'untrained in public speaking'). [Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 502.]

⁵² 2 Cor. 5:12. οὐ πάλιν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστάνομεν ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν διδόντες ὑμῖν καυχήματος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ἔχητε πρὸς τοὺς ἐν προσώπῳ καυχωμένους καὶ μὴ ἐν καρδίᾳ. **We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart.**

⁵⁶Any political campaign will reflect this negative strategy of comparisons. Every politician must decide how to approach campaigning. Whether to focus on his/her own values and commitments or whether to claim superiority to one's opponents assumed lack of worthy values and commitments. When such becomes a strategy inside the church immediately there is loss of credibility and high values by the church.

comparing themselves to themselves.⁵⁷ After completely rejecting comparisons to others as legitimate measuring of one's achievements (v. 12a), Paul now asserts the craziness of such comparisons being done by his opponents. The twin participles μετροῦντες καὶ συγκρίνοντες flanked on either side by the objects ἑαυτοὺς stresses both methodology (μετροῦντες) and results (συγκρίνοντες) in this comparative based evaluation. Paul's assessment is that conclusions reached like this indicate that such individuals οὐ συνιάσιν, **do not have any sense**. The idea of συνίημι here in the present tense third plural spelling is the lack of realization that no legitimate conclusions can ever be reached through such flawed methodology.

He then proceeds in vv. 13-16 to explain to his readers the only legitimate base for making evaluative judgments about achievements. This is done in two Greek sentences, the first stating how Paul does it (v. 13; #s 211-212) and the second why he does it this way (vv. 14-16; #s 213 - 214).

V. 13, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. **We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you.**

10.13 δὲ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα
211 ἡμεῖς οὐκ...καυχησόμεθα
 ἀλλὰ
212 (ἡμεῖς καυχησόμεθα)
 κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος
 οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρον,
 ἐφικέσθαι
 ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν.

The contrastive assertions are set up by οὐκ... ἀλλὰ beginning with the negative assertion and followed by the positive: not this...but that. The core concept is established as καυχησόμεθα, **we will boast**, from καυχάομαι. The translation dilemma is how to express the idea. The English word 'boast' is commonly used but the more precise idea of καυχάομαι is closer to 'take pride in.' The inner sense of good feeling is normally articulated verbally, and neither of these English language ideas really gathers this up clearly and obviously.

Paul asserts that he and his associates will not

⁵⁷The divisiveness in the Corinthian community depicted in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 most likely had some connection to what Paul addresses here in 2 Cor. 10:12-18. His comments in vv. 12-13 assume human based comparisons:

12 λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει· ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι Παῦλος, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. 13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; **12 What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."** 13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

καυχάομαι εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα, **into the immeasurable areas**. The word group μέτρον, ἄμετρος, μετρέω in ancient Greek defined weights and balances along with the action of weighing something. Based upon this literal meaning came the figurative use that defined in philosophy that which had value, e.g., the idiom μέτρον πάντων **the measure of all things**. Out of this came the LXX use to translate the Hebrew הַיָּמָה with a strong tone of divine judgment.⁵⁸ The background meaning of divine judgment stands behind most of the NT uses of **this word group** as well.⁵⁹ This language used here by

⁵⁸“μέτρον (from Hom. II., 7, 471; 12, 422; Od., 2, 355; 9, 209 etc.) means a. ‘measure’ as an instrument of measuring (whether cubic or of length); b. ‘proportion,’ ‘order’ (common in the class. poets, also the pap.); 1 c. ‘measure of verse or syllables’; d. ‘what is measured as the result of measuring,’ ‘the measured part’ (place, road, time), both literally and figuratively.

“The term μέτρον became particularly significant in Gk. philosophy. The μέτρον πάντων, the abs. measure of all things, esp. of values, was set by Protagoras exclusively in men: πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν (Fr., 1 [II, 263, 3 ff., Diels5]). In contrast, Plato finds it only in God (Leg., IV, 716c: ὁ δὲ θεὸς ἡμῖν πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἂν εἴη μάλιστα, καὶ πολλὸ μᾶλλον ἢ πού τις, ὡς φασιν, ἄνθρωπος). This thought is particularly important in Neo-Platonism: Plot. Enn., I, 8, 3; cf. VI, 8, 18: περίληψις πάντων καὶ μέτρον; V, 5, 4: μέτρον γὰρ αὐτὸ καὶ οὐ μετρούμενον.

“In the LXX μέτρον is mostly used for מִזְרָג, apart from some secular refs.: 1. with ref. to the cultic measurements of the tabernacle and temple, esp. Ez. 40–48; 2. of correct measures and weights which stand under God's protection and are superintended in the temple, Lv. 19:35; Dt. 25:14 f.; Prv. 20:10; Am. 8:5; 1 Ch. 23:29; 3. of the measures of the world as an expression of the belief in creation: Job 11:9; 28:25; 38:5; Wis. 11:20; 4. in threats of destruction and judgment sayings: 4 Βασ. 21:13; Is. 5:10; Ez. 4:11, 16; Lam. 2:8; ψ 79:5; Zech. 5:6 ff.; 5. in the salvation saying in Zech. 1:16.

“μετρέω (at least from Hom.: Od., 3, 179) means a. ‘to measure,’ ‘to traverse’ (the sea); fig. ‘to evaluate,’ ‘to judge’; b. in the phrase τινί τι, ‘to measure something to someone’ (from Eur. and Aristoph.). In the LXX μετρέω is used for מִזְרָג, e.g., Ex. 16:18. It is found in the pap.²”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:632.]

⁵⁹“The passages which characterise the NT use of μέτρον and μετρέω refer a. to the judicial work of God in the Last Judgment and b. to the gift of grace allotted to us.

“a. In the proverbial expression ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν in Mt. 7:2 (cf. Mk. 4:24 and Lk. 6:38b) there comes to full expression the eschatological seriousness with which Jesus establishes the μὴ κρίνετε by reference to the divine judgment corresponding to human judging. The rule finds in Rabbinic writings many parallels in wording or meaning; in Sota, 1, 7 it runs: לֵךְ מִדְּבַר הַיָּמָה בְּמִזְרָג שֶׁהַיָּמָה, ‘with the measure with which a man measures, one (i.e., God) will measure to him.’⁵⁵ Nevertheless, in the application of the norm there is a fundamental difference

Paul hints at the gaping hole in how the Corinthians were ‘measuring.’ They were doing it by human standards and not by God’s standards. The point then of ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμεθα is that Paul and his associates would not venture into measurements beyond those established by God. Note the doubly strong emphasis upon ‘we’ with the stating of ἡμεῖς and the placing of it first in the sentence. In verse 15 where the phrase is repeated but with the addition of ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις, *in the labors of others*, the meaning centers on the places that God assigns His servants

between Jesus and the Rabbis. With the help of this rule the latter establish and regulate human judging; Jesus, however, rejects all judging, and His prohibition is absolute: μὴ κρίνετε. ‘The reason for this contradictory use of the same principle is that Jesus did not see the one and ultimate will of God in the norm which demands retribution.’⁶ The reverse side of κρίνειν is forgiveness, which Jesus requires of His disciples in view of God’s readiness to forgive.

“At the end of a series of sayings in which the positive duty of exercising forgiveness is set in juxtaposition with the prohibition of judging, Lk. 6:38b has the words: ὃ γὰρ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε ἀντιμετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν. These seem first to be the basis of the divine reward which is certain for those who show mercy. But they should not be related only to v. 38a. They refer to the whole group of sayings, including the μὴ κρίνετε κτλ. of v. 37. This solves the difficulty which seems to be presented by the fact that in the preceding words: μέτρον καλὸν πεπιεσμένον κτλ. (v. 38a), emphasis is laid on the superabundant reward of God, whereas the saying ὃ γὰρ μέτρῳ κτλ. stresses ‘the quantitative equivalence of retribution.’⁷ The form of the text in Mt. and Mk. is more original than that in Lk.⁸

“b. But the figure of the μέτρον is also used to express the diversity and manifoldness of the gifts of grace allotted to each man, Eph. 4:7 (with emphasis on the ἐνότης, as in 1 C. 12);⁹ Eph. 4:16; R. 12:3. To show what is the one final goal of the members of the community—the goal which the various gifts must serve—μέτρον is then used in the sense of full measure in Eph. 4:13 (→ 633). In 2 C. 10:13, in contrast to the unmeasured boasting of his opponents in Corinth, the measure by which Paul would be measured is the sphere of missionary activity which God has assigned to him as an apostle. This measure is not human; it is indicated by God.

“If it is true of all the gifts of Christians that they have a measure and limit, Christ Himself has received the gift of the Spirit from God without measure or restriction. This is the meaning of Jn. 3:34: οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν τὸ πνεῦμα.¹⁰ Although the present δίδωσιν might lead us to take the statement as a general rule, the context shows that it refers only to Christ, and according to the context again God alone can be the subject.¹¹ This is shown plainly both by what precedes (v. 34a) and what follows (v. 35).

“c. μετρέω has a distinctive sense in Rev. 11:1 f. In this vision, which is influenced by Ez. 40:3 ff., μετρέω in v. 1, considered along with v. 2, takes on the sense ‘to preserve.’¹² The temple of God is to be measured, i.e., preserved, but the outer court, which is not to be measured, will not be preserved.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:633–634.]

to go. God had assigned Paul to preach the Gospel in Corinth and he was faithful to that divine assignment.⁶⁰

This is the central point of the positive assertion in v. 13b (# 212). Legitimate καυχώμενοι could then take place κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν, *according to the limits of the assignment where God who measures has measured, to reach out even to you also*. The apostle did take immense pride in what God was doing in his ministry that sought to go exactly where God directed. And this included the Corinthians (ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν).

b) *Limited appropriate boastings, vv. 14-16.*

γὰρ
οὐ
ὡς μὴ ἐφικνούμενοι
εἰς ὑμᾶς
213 ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς,
γὰρ
ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν
214 ἐφθάσαμεν
10.15 ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι
| ἐν ἀλλοτρίοις κόποις,
| δὲ
ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες
| | ἀξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν
| | ἐν ὑμῖν
| μεγαλυνθῆναι
| κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν
| εἰς περισσεῖαν
10.16 | εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν
εὐαγγελίσασθαι,
| οὐκ ἐν ἀλλοτρίῳ κανόνι
| εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα
καυχήσασθαι.

In the second justifying assertion (γὰρ in vv. 12, 14a, 14b), Paul defends his coming to Corinth as being within the limits of God’s assignment: 14 οὐ γὰρ ὡς

⁶⁰To some extent the agreement described in Gal. 2:9 stands behind this: καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν· and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

But one should resist pressing this geographically and too exclusively. The subsequent ministries of Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and John described inside the NT would suggest a broad understanding here that meant dominate orientation but not exclusive orientation.

Yet one can say that with the positive assertion in v. 12b the phrase ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν does have some geographical implications. Corinth was the western most point of Paul’s three missionary journeys, and he was planning the next stage to be from Rome to Spain as he indicated in Romans 15: 18-29.

μη ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς, ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι. 14 *For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action.*

The first justifying declaration (#213) asserts the legitimacy of Paul and his associates' coming to Corinth, and the next justifying declaration (#214) affirms his expectation of being able to move on to new places assuming the spiritual growth of the Corinthians under his instruction. Just what is he saying by these observations?

It is difficult, to say the least, to understand clearly the point being made. The figurative usage of terms rather than direct literal language complicates the process of understanding. Add to that are cultural dynamics coming most likely out of the Greek philosophical traditions that bear little resemblance to anything in modern western culture. But with careful analysis we will attempt to make sense out of these assertions.

Coming to Corinth, v. 14a. οὐ γὰρ ὡς μη ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς, *For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you.*⁶¹

10.14 γὰρ
οὐ
ὡς μη ἐφικνούμενοι
εἰς ὑμᾶς
213 ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς,

As the diagram shows, the primary point made here is οὐ...ὑπερεκτείνομεν ἑαυτούς, *we are not over extending ourselves*. Everything else attaches defining limits on this base idea. First comes ὡς μη ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς, *as we should be if we had not already come to you*.⁶² This temporal participle phrase asserts that the apostle was the first commissioned apostle to reach Corinth and this fact gives his mission there validity. He is not treading on someone else's territory. Very likely standing behind this is the criticism from the outsiders having come into Corinth claiming a superior authority from the Jerusalem apostles to counterman Paul's preaching of the Gospel. Paul had just stated in v. 13, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος οὗ ἐμέρισεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς μέτρου, *But we will not boast beyond proper limits and instead will keep to the limits that God has assigned us*. Those assigned limits, τὸ μέτρον τοῦ κανόνος, included Corinth: ἐφικέσθαι ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν. Thus in coming to Corinth before any other apostle did with the Gospel -- ἐφικνούμενοι εἰς ὑμᾶς -- means that Paul can legitimately boast over the Corinthians. In no way then had he overstepped the boundaries of his divine assignment, as his opponents were charging.

γὰρ
ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν
ἐφθάσαμεν
ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι
| ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις,
| δὲ
ἐλπίδα ἔχοντες
| | αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν
| | ἐν ὑμῖν
| μεγαλυνθῆναι
| κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν
| εἰς περισσεῖαν
10.16 | εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν
εὐαγγελίσασθαι,
| οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι
| εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα
καυχῆσασθαι.

Moving beyond Corinth, vv. 14b-16. 14b ἄχρι γὰρ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐφθάσαμεν ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 15 οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελίσασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ

⁶¹“With its two negative statements (οὐ and μή), the first part of v. 14 restates as an elucidation (γάρ) what is said positively in v. 13. ‘We are not overreaching ourselves’ corresponds to ‘[we will boast] in accordance with our limit’ (v. 13b), while ‘as if we do not reach you’ matches ‘(an assignment) that certainly reaches as far as you’ (v. 13c). Because v. 14 is explanatory (γάρ) and the expression οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα (v. 13) is repeated in v. 15 (with οὐκ ... καυχώμενοι), some treat v. 14 as parenthetical.⁵⁰ This is possible, but the link between v. 14b and v. 15a suggests otherwise: Paul’s reaching Corinth with the gospel shows that his boasting about Corinth is not beyond proper limits and in someone else’s labors.” [Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Milton Keynes, UK: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.; Paternoster Press, 2005), 716–717.]

⁶²The translation and thus interpretation of the unit in vv. 14-16 depends heavily upon the placement of the second negative μή. If it modifies the participle ἐφικνούμενοι -- the most natural understanding -- then it produces a translation along the lines of the above rendering (Martin, WBC, vol. 40, p. 504). But if it qualifies as an elliptically understood verb the translation should follow as “as it should not be since we already began coming to you.”

κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι. 14b for we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action.

This second justifying expression (vv. 14b-16) extends the first one (v. 14a) and further defends the claims in v. 13 of limited boasting. Proper understanding of the claims in v. 13 thus depends upon the explanation given in vv. 14b-16.

The key verb is ἐφθάσαμεν from φθάνω with the sense of *reaching ahead of* or *arriving before others*. The aorist first plural indicative spelling stresses Paul and his associates having reached the Corinthians (ἄχρι καὶ ὑμῶν) ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, *with the Gospel*, before the arrival of these outsiders. Thus boasting about the Corinthians was well within Paul's legitimate rights as an apostolic messenger.

He goes on (v. 15a) to assert that he will not boast (=take credit for) about the labors of other apostolic messengers: οὐκ εἰς τὰ ἄμετρα καυχώμενοι ἐν ἄλλοτρίοις κόποις, *not boasting into the limits beyond, in the labors of others*. Behind this evidently stands the Jerusalem agreement with the Twelve depicted in Gal. 2:9, καὶ γνόντες τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι, Ἰάκωβος καὶ Κηφᾶς καὶ Ἰωάννης, οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι, δεξιὰς ἔδωκαν ἐμοὶ καὶ Βαρναβᾶ κοινωνίας, *ἵνα ἡμεῖς εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, αὐτοὶ δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν*· and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing *that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised*. The apostle was keen to take the Gospel to 'virgin' territories where no other apostle had already worked in (cf. Rom. 15:20-21). If they wanted to work in 'his fields' after him, then their labors that built on the foundation that he had laid was fine (cf. 1 Cor. 3:5-9). But they must not try to undo his work and replace it with something different (cf. Gal. 1:6-10). From all indications this was exactly what the outsiders who came to Corinth were seeking to do. Whether or not they represented the same mentality that Paul had to deal with among the Galatian churches is far less clear. Superficially some similarities seem to be present. But the honest truth is that not enough information about what these people stood for is given to draw any substantive conclusions. Chapters eleven and twelve provide about the only information available. Keeping the characterization of them separate from those inside the Corinthian church who didn't care for Paul is one of the interpretive barriers that is difficult to scale successfully.

Standing in contrast to the existing situation is Paul's expectation of the future growing out of Corinth (vv. 15b-16): ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι κατὰ τὸν κανόνα ἡμῶν εἰς περισσεῖαν 16 εἰς τὰ ὑπερέκεινα ὑμῶν εὐαγγελισασθαι, οὐκ ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ κανόνι εἰς τὰ ἔτοιμα καυχῆσασθαι, *but having expectation that your faith will grow, our boundaries of action may then be enlarged extensively so that we can preach the Gospel well beyond you without boasting in the work of others in their defined boundaries*.

The apostle saw his primary calling from God to be a church planter rather than an ongoing pastor. To be sure, he felt deep pastoral responsibility for the churches established under his ministry, as his extensive letter writing ministry affirms. But at the top of the priority list was to plant churches in brand new territory where no other apostolic messenger had gone. The primary limitation on that objective was the spiritual health of his previously established churches.

How quickly and how much he would be able to achieve this depended in part on the progress of the church at Corinth. Does this imply his desire to use Corinth as a 'home base' for expanded missionary work? Clearly from Luke's account in Acts, Antioch of Syria had functioned in this capacity. And in Romans 15:24 which was written from Corinth after Paul's arrival there, he anticipated the church at Rome functioning as home base for a missionary strategy for the western Mediterranean activity. To take Paul's statement here as presupposing such a role for Corinth is not credible.

His anticipated expanded ministry -- ἐν ὑμῖν μεγαλυνθῆναι -- depends upon the successful conclusion of the issues raised by his opponents at Corinth -- ἐλπίδα δὲ ἔχοντες αὐξανομένης τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν. The foundational assumption under this is that evangelistic ministry in new fields depends upon successful pastoral ministry in existing fields. One does not -- and should not -- establish new fields of ministry until existing fields are stable and spiritually healthy. Otherwise, the entire endeavor is headed for collapse. Another aspect of the enlargement of ministry -- μεγαλυνθῆναι -- here is getting the entire community on board with the apostolic Gospel and weaned off of the corruption of the Gospel from the outsiders. When this could be achieved, then his ambition of moving on to new fields of missionary activity would be possible.

c) The bottom line basis for boasting, vv. 17-18.

17 Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω· 18 οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν. 17 *Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.* 18 *For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.*

The apostle concludes this discussion by resorting

10.17 δὲ
215 Ὁ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω·
 10.18 γὰρ
 ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων,
216 οὐ... ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος,
 ἀλλ'
 ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν
217 (ἐστὶν δόκιμος).

to general axioms based on scriptural citation.⁶³ The scripture is taken from Jeremiah 9:23-24 (LXX 9:22-23):⁶⁴

22 Τάδε λέγει κύριος Μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ σοφὸς ἐν τῇ σοφίᾳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ ἰσχυρὸς ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτοῦ, καὶ μὴ καυχάσθω ὁ πλούσιος ἐν τῷ πλούτῳ αὐτοῦ, † 23 ἀλλ' ἢ ἐν τούτῳ καυχάσθω ὁ καυχώμενος, συνίειν καὶ γινώσκειν ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ποιῶν ἔλεος καὶ κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἐν τούτοις τὸ θέλημά μου, λέγει κύριος. †

23 Thus says the Lord: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; 24 but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, says the Lord.

Clearly Paul's declaration Ὁ δὲ καυχώμενος ἐν κυρίῳ καυχάσθω, and the one boasting let him be boasting in the Lord (#215), is at best a summarizing of Jeremiah's longer declaration in the Lord's behalf. It is not an exact quotation, but it does capture the essence of Jeremiah's text. If there is any pride to be talked about it must be pride in what God is doing rather than pride in what the individual is doing. This foundational axiom underlies everything that Paul has claimed in this discussion in chapter ten. It especially comes full circle to the opening assertion in this subunit in vv. 12-18, Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτοὺς τισὶν τῶν ἑαυτοὺς συνιστανόντων, for we dare not classify or compare ourselves to some who are commending themselves

⁶³In a typically Pauline mannerism, the writer clinches his point with an OT citation, followed (in v 18) with an explanatory comment, which in turn binds together the initial part of his discussion in v 12 with its conclusion in v 18 in a 'ring composition.' The hook-word is συνίστημι, 'commend/recommend.' The issue at stake is κανόν, 'sphere,' and its demarcation, whether it is (1) the product of human endeavor, thus deserving the praise or blame that a person seeks either to gain or avoid for the work done in mission service, or (2) an assignment from 'the Lord,' who gives it validity and so is the only one who can rightly commend it as 'approved' (δόκιμος).¹⁸⁸ [Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, ed. Ralph P. Martin, Lynn Allan Losie, and Peter H. Davids, Second Edition., vol. 40, Word Biblical Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 508.]

⁶⁴The variation in verse references is caused by differing versification in the English translation that follows the original Hebrew text, from that in the Greek translation of the Septuagint (LXX). Often the LXX counts beginning text unit titles as the beginning verse while the Hebrew text doesn't. Here the versification gets messed up in 9:8 with the LXX splitting it into two verses.

(v. 12). Those doing this at Corinth, Paul asserts, do not possess good sense (οὐ συνιᾶσιν; v. 12b).

In typical Jewish scribal fashion the apostle then proceeds to amplify and apply this in the justifying declarations in v. 18 (#s 216 - 217): οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, ἀλλ' ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν, For it is not the one who commends himself that is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. The bottom line is that divine approval is the only matter than counts. And those He approves He also commends to the saints of God.

The phrasing of this in vv. 17-18 in the third person singular rather than the expected third person plural from v. 12b underscores the axiomatic nature of Paul's declaration here. It also ties these statements closely to the τις in vv. 7-11. To be sure, it is the spiritual principle that Paul and his associates follow as vv. 12-16 claims. But it isn't what anyone of the Corinthian opponents of Paul were following (vv. 7-11). A slight shift in narrative perspective but a huge stinging accusation against his opponents at Corinth.

The actions of boasting (καυχώμενος / καυχάσθω) and of commending / recommending (συνιστάνων / συνίστησιν) have legitimacy only when focused on the Lord who approves the actions (δόκιμος). In the parallelism between ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος, that one is approved, and ὃν ὁ κύριος συνίστησιν, whom the Lord commends, reflects the Jewish step parallelistic structure. That is, divine approval leads to divine commendation. The contrastive ἀλλ' highlights the 'step up' in this structure to the higher level of God's recommendation of such a person who is boasting in the Lord. Self commendation forfeits divine approval (οὐ γὰρ ὁ ἑαυτὸν συνιστάνων, ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν δόκιμος).

This understanding of Jeremiah by Paul places him squarely in the category of having divine approval, while his opponents by their self commendation have forfeited God's approval and recommendation. I'm quite confident when this letter was read in the house church groups at Corinth where some of these opposing individuals were present, there were no amens of affirmation of Paul. Had they been using the Hebrew scriptures to somehow justify their actions, Paul's straightforward interpretation of Jeremiah 9 powerfully contradicted them.

How does this apply to believers in the modern world? Not just vv. 17-18 but 10:1-18? Modern western culture is a highly competitive culture. Competition exists only by comparison of oneself to others. One clear example of this is in the field of athletics.⁶⁵ To be sure,

⁶⁵Both structurally and pragmatically modern athletics stresses intense comparison between individuals, teams of athletes etc. It is interesting that in a few areas of athletic competition compet-

the level of competitiveness is much higher in the western hemisphere than in Europe. And this largely due to much greater emphasis upon individualism rather than collectivism in society. What Paul advocates for believers is diametrically opposed to our western cultural mind-set. Here is one of those places where scriptural principle intensely clashes with modern cultural values. The modern Christian is then caught in a dilemma between two very opposing demands. One must live in this comparative world but must not be guided by it. Not easy to do at all.

Can we be non-competitive in our Christian life but competitive everywhere else?⁶⁶ Is it enough to give 'sportsmanship awards' in athletics after championship awards have been handed out? What living in radically different cultures in different parts of the world has taught me is that how to be a faithful believer in a competitive culture necessitates differing responses depending upon the particular culture one finds him/herself in. The cultural diversity of the modern world is astounding.⁶⁷

The first step in making application is to conclude a listing of general principles set forth in chapter ten. From this potential points of application will emerge more easily. What are some of these general principles is de-emphasized, namely in children's T-ball baseball games where no scores are kept and the emphasis is upon learning the rules of the game and developing skills to play the game. But by middle school age, the kids are structured increasingly into competitiveness to establish who is better skilled at playing the game. Personal excellence then becomes the top priority for the youngster. Competitive excellence has the twin brother of discrimination against those with lesser skills. They become the 'bench warmers' who eventually drop out of sports completely. The psychological damage done by this instilling of inferiority into their psyche often causes life long hurt and harm.

⁶⁶It has been an interesting pilgrimage for me to come out of Texas culture where sports is the major religion of the vast majority of people to live in Europe, and Germany in particular, where sports are relegated to independent clubs with no connection to schools at any level from primary through university life in Germany. Transitioning between these two opposite ends of the cultural poles has often been a challenge for me. But I have seen up close that a far less competitive culture can value excellence apart from competitiveness. And typically that excellence is greater than what is produced in the highly competitive society of the US.

This can and typically does mean that Christian excellence has greater substance because the believer is freer to focus on God and His approval apart from the approval or disapproval of other individuals around him / her. And ironically I have observed that the role of the group takes on a different more spiritually healthy role of encourager more so than critic. Even criticism in this setting has a different tone. It is meant to help rather than tear down. Learning all this for me has been both one of the greatest challenges and best divine blessings of my seven decades plus long life.

⁶⁷Of course one of the foundational principles of interpretation is that the closer the application setting matches the setting of the biblical text being applied the easier it is to find clear application of biblical text based principles.

ples?

1) **Ministry should be customized.**

That is, different situations require differing responses. In 10:1-5, the criticism of inconsistency against Paul was answered by his asserting differing needs between the time of his being with the Corinthians in person and other times when a letter to them was necessitated. Anyone who has been engaged in Christian ministry for any amount of time knows well that specific ministry depends heavily upon very individualized situations that seldom ever are the same. *The effective minister knows how to take eternal values and apply them to each particular situation.*

Not everyone will understand this.⁶⁸ People may superficially think the minister is not being consistent or fair across the board. But 'one size does not fit all' in Gospel ministry ever. Any pastor or preacher who advocates rigid rules, usually falsely depicted as "laws of God," to every situation is a minister to be avoided at all costs. He clearly has no experience in divine grace nor possess the wisdom of God!

2) **Ministry often necessitates challenging cultural norms.**

The background of the criticism of the apostle especially emphasized in 10:1-6 was that of the conventional Greco-Roman standards of honor and shame. The apostle in response to the critics' human based evaluations was to insist on new definitions of honor and shame based on eternal principles. One's actions must not be judged proper or improper by man made standards. Rather, they must be measured against divine standards. Central to this shift of definition is the criterium of whether ministry genuinely helps people come into a saving knowledge of God or not. Does what the minister says and does point them to deeper awareness of God (cf. v. 4)?

Ministry is good or bad not based upon human judgments, but rather solely on the basis of divine criteria. Paul passionately sought to get this point across to his Corinthian readers. Modern day churches and church members would do well to hear him carefully and affirmatively. Far too often the success or failure of a local church pastor is measured along the same lines as the local high school football coach. If the pastor has a "winning season" -- lots of additions, high levels of financial giving to the church, popularity in the community et als. -- then he or she is considered a successful pastor. If not, then the need for the pastor to move on

⁶⁸The divisive mess earlier at Corinth addressed in 1 Cor. 1:10-17 had reflected an early tendency at Corinth to adopt man made values over divinely established values. And worse still to tout these man made values (ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, v. 17) as being superior to God's wisdom. In 1:18-31, Paul leveled a devastating condemnation of this nonsense by the Corinthians.

to a new church is verbalized increasingly among the members. The scripture principles advocated in chapter ten utterly condemn such as of the Devil himself!

The biblical demand is that we evaluate our spiritual leaders by God's criteria and not by those of the world around us. And central to the divine criteria is whether the spiritual leader is leading people to deeper awareness of God in their lives. To do this genuinely will necessitate 'rocking the boat' on occasion and upsetting carnal Christians who are ruining their lives in disobedience to God. Paul had done this more than once at Corinth. But he always communicated his love and commitment for the very best spiritually for them. His bluntness was that of agape, not flushing personal anger over being criticized. It was easier to communicate this compassion in person rather than through letters evidently for Paul. His critics at Corinth twisted this into inconsistency on his part that disqualified him from being a spiritual leader.⁶⁹

3) Ministry must be carried out under divine authorization.

In 10:7-11, speaks of his ministry being done under assignment of God. His varying actions and approaches -- insistency asserted by his Corinthian critics -- in actually reflected God's leadership in his ministry. Paul speaks of ἐξουσία from God. One common mistake made by modern commentators and translators is to render this Greek word as 'authority.' In reality it connotes the idea of 'authorization' instead. As a consequence of this mistake much discussion then is given to the pastor's authority in ministry. Such modern cultural twisting of Paul's words then puts false words in his mouth and fails to understand some far deeper and more spiritually liberating ideas that are being communicated in the text.

The spiritual reality in Paul's words affirms God's credentializing of him to minister in the Lord's behalf in order to build up the Corinthian community spiritually (εἰς οἰκοδομήν), rather than tear them down in advocating divisiveness, as his opponents in Corinth were doing. What stands behind the apostle's claim to consistency in v. 11 is a consistent following of God's leadership. His critics may see him as skilled in writing but inept in speaking (v. 10), but they are missing the point by using their human criteria. Thus Paul refuses their shaming efforts (οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσομαι v. 8b), because they have no validity spiritually.

For the minister in today's world, one of his or

⁶⁹As noted in the earlier exegesis, we should avoid reading 'cowardice' into this criticism. Such is a modern western culturally encouraged reading that has no basis at all in the scripture text. The honor / shame standards of Greco-Roman culture coupled with the Roman leadership profile of a very aggressive 'take charge' personality always is what is standing behind the Corinthian criticism of Paul.

her greatest moments of temptation to turn to worldly standards comes not on Sunday but on Monday at the weekly ministerial alliance meeting. Areas pastors come together and far too often are guilty of bragging about their 'successes' the day before on purely worldly bases. "I really blew the top out in my sermon yesterday!" "I had a huge number of public decisions yesterday!" Just to name a few of the comments I've heard over the years. Far too many of those that I have attended in over half a century plus of ministry were among the most secular bragging sessions that you would ever find taking place. They stand as the modern reflection of Paul's opponents at Corinth in their gatherings.

What the apostle concerned himself with centered on whether or not he was submissive to God's leadership and said God's words to the people or not. How they responded to it was their responsibility. His was to speak faithfully what the Lord prompted him to say.⁷⁰

To be sure, there exists a false twisting of the disdain for being influenced by others. Usually it goes under the label of being "prophetic" and becomes an expression of arrogant pride and elitism by the religious leader.

Watch several of the US TV preachers to get a real life picture of what I'm describing. They typify this phony piety very closely. Deep in their personality is huge insecurity and self doubt, and their human based coping mechanism is repugnant assertiveness. But it has to be covered up with layers of phony piety that claims to be doing God's will. The more they thunderously scream down God's wrath on sin, the more popular they become with many people in their audience. Their meetings are textbook examples of people manipulation based on worldly standards.

4) Standards of ministry success must never be based on comparison to others.

In verses 12-18, the apostle intensely condemns the evaluative standards of his opponents at Corinth. They found a pseudo superiority in comparing themselves to others around them: ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτούς τισιν (v. 12a). This in turn led to self recommendation of themselves to the Christian community: τισιν τῶν ἑαυτοῦς συνιστανόντων (v. 12b). When I evaluate myself and then sell myself as superior based on that self evaluation, Paul indicates, I am not demonstrating good sense: οὐ συνιᾶσιν (v. 12c). Such should be clear. The apostle utterly shuns such comparisons: Οὐ γὰρ τολμῶμεν ἐγκρίναι ἢ συγκρίναι ἑαυτούς (v. 12a).

Crucial to understanding vv. 12-18 is making a prop-

⁷⁰It is a lame copout to excuse yourself from this passionate commitment to doing God's will by claiming that Paul did not have mortgage payments to make or a family to support. Such avoidance to obedience reflects an ungodly compromise with worldly values in denial of biblical values.

er connection between συνιστανόντων (commending / recommending) and καυχησόμεθα (boasting / taking pride in). In modern western culture if one is to sell himself as superior to some group, he must boast about his superior accomplishments. Some modern commentators struggle with Paul's terminology -- which is very rarely found in the NT -- because of their modern cultural conditioning. The idea of commending oneself here comes out of the verb συνίστημι which etymologically means to place oneself before others in a comparison to some standard of evaluation. Crucial then is what standard of comparison is being used and who is doing the commending. Paul's opponents were commending themselves based on human standards to comparison, i.e., the worldly wisdom detailed in 1 Cor. 1:26-31. Paul argues that commendation needs to come from God and is measured by His standards alone (10:13-16). Only then can boasting (καυχησόμεθα) become legitimate. How? Because it centers on the superior accomplishments of God and not on what the religious leader has done. Paul advocates a Christianity that centers on helping others, while his opponents centered their emphasis upon a 'meism' egocentric Christianity.

In our present times the self-centered tendencies of western culture dominate social life heavily. Media channels used by religious leaders such as TV tend to foster and encourage this mind-set among Christians. The mega growth in numbers of some churches cultivates this with worship more as religious entertainment than as demanding surrender to God. The resulting hypocrisy and the rapidly growing gulf between the lifestyle of Christians today and the teachings of Jesus plays a significant role in the rapid decline of Christianity in western societies.⁷¹ Young adults in the US are abandoning church life in large numbers largely due to this contradiction. Paul's insights in chapter ten on how to do ministry properly as self-sacrificing focus on helping others is critically needed in church life today.

5) Boasting about ministry poses substantial

⁷¹The eye catching introduction to Robert P. Jones' *THE END OF WHITE CHRISTIAN AMERICA*, published in July 2016, captures this point dramatically by couching it in the literary form of an obituary:

"After a long life spanning nearly two hundred and forty years, White Christian America -- a prominent cultural force in the nations' history -- has died. WCA first began to exhibit troubling symptoms in the 1960s when white mainline Protestant denominations began to shrink, but showed signs of rallying with the rise of the Christian Right in the 1980s. Following the 2004 presidential election, however, it became clear that WCA's powers were falling. Although examiners have not been able to pinpoint the exact time of death, the best evidence suggests that WCA finally succumbed in the latter part of the first decade of the twenty-first century" [p. 1]

Jones goes on to provide massive demographic data to make the case for this contention.

dangers.

Also in vv. 12-18, as well as 20 times in Second Corinthians, the verb καυχάομαι⁷² surfaces as an important theme for Paul in this letter. The tension inherent here between secular cultural perceptions and biblical principle regarding καυχάομαι is very noticeable. In commending themselves Paul's opponents were boasting about their own accomplishments and superiority. Paul steadfastly argues that boasting, καυχάομαι, must center on God and His accomplishments. His own spiritual journey had taught him well that individuals can never stack up enough accomplishments to merit God's acceptance. Everything in the Christian life revolves around what God does to make us acceptable to Himself. Ministry to others done legitimately then centers on the guidance and power of God flowing through the individual believer and the believing community to positively impact the lives of others. This is God's working, not ours. We are His arms, legs, tongue etc. enabling God to draw others to Himself in redemption.

Now exactly what is καυχάομαι when done legitimately? The root stem καυχ- conveys an inward perspective that is normally expressed verbally toward others. The inner sense can be described as pride and a sense of well being. The verbalization of this inner perspective is the boasting aspect. Proper καυχάομαι then centers its pride not on itself⁷³ but on God and then verbalizes that in praise and adoration of God.

The apostle saw the fatal flaw in the self boasting of his opponents at Corinth. It is a denial of the very core of the Christian Gospel. Christianity is not about the individual at all. It is completely about God. Self-boasting treats God as a Coke machine who exists to satisfy our wants and desires. Such an approach is spiritual suicide! Therefore the apostle's pleas to the Corinthians, including his opponents, were to abandon such self-boasting and focus on God. Unless modern Christianity adopts Paul's perspective it will doom itself in spiritual suicide as well.

There is much for us to learn from chapter ten in Second Corinthians. The above just touches the tip of the iceberg in what is contained in these eighteen verses.

⁷²Added to this verb usage stands the noun usage of καύχημα (3x) and καύχησις (6x) also in Second Corinthians. All deal with the idea of boasting and pride. For more details see topics 33.368-33.373 in the Louw-Nida Greek lexicon based on semantic domains.

⁷³Note James' observation on self boasting (4:16): νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν· πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρὰ ἐστίν. *As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.*