

## Small Group Materials (2 Corinthians 10:1-18)

### Pray for your time together in God's Word!

**Read the passage out loud as a group.** Option: Give the group 5 minutes to look at the passage by themselves.

### This Week's Passage

#### Scripture Reference

2 Corinthians 10:1-18

*New International Version (NIV)*

<sup>1</sup> By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away! <sup>2</sup> I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. <sup>3</sup> For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup> We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. <sup>6</sup> And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

<sup>7</sup> You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do. <sup>8</sup> So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. <sup>9</sup> I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters. <sup>10</sup> For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.” <sup>11</sup> Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

<sup>12</sup> We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise. <sup>13</sup> We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you. <sup>14</sup> We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ. <sup>15</sup> Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, <sup>16</sup> so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory. <sup>17</sup> But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” <sup>18</sup> For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

### Discussion

**Ask the Group:** What about this passage stood out to you?

*Leaders' Note: This question gives your group the opportunity to explore their own ideas before leading them to specific discussion. Caution: Do not let this turn into a debate about personal understandings—keep it more on the “observation” level.*

**Ask the Group:** Throughout 2 Corinthians, Paul has been heavily criticized by a rebellious minority. What is the main argument against Paul in this passage?

*Possible Answer: (See vv. 1, 10) Paul is “timid” in person and “bold” in his letters.*

**Ask the Group:** In vv. 3-4, Paul says that even though we live in this world, we fight with weapons not of this world. What are these weapons?

*Leaders’ Note: You may have your group read about the armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-20*

*Possible Answers: God’s authority, armor of God, prayer, etc.*

Possible Transition: One of the areas we “do battle” is in our minds.

**Ask the Group:** What would it look like for a Christian to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (vs. 5)?

*Possible Answers: Ask God to direct their thoughts, be aware of their thoughts, make the choice to turn from evil desires and cling to the Lord, don’t try to keep secrets from God, etc.*

- **Ask the Group:** Has there been a time in your life when you’ve worked on taking specific thoughts captive?
- **Ask the Group:** What did you do?

**Ask the Group:** In his letters to the Corinthians, Paul has been harsh in his criticism; however, looking at vv. 7-11, what is Paul’s intent in his ministry?

*Possible Answers: Paul was granted authority to build up or establish rather than tear down. His intent is not to frighten, but to teach and discipline.*

**Ask the Group:** In what does the world “boast”?

*Possible Answers: Personal success (e.g. financial gain, influence, position, etc.), strength (e.g. war), appearance, etc.*

- **Ask the Group:** According to this passage, in what does Paul say Christians should and shouldn’t boast?  
*Possible Answers: Boast in the authority that the Lord gives us (v. 8), not in ourselves or our wisdom (v. 12), don’t boast beyond proper limits (v. 13), only boasting in what God gives (v. 13), don’t boast in what you haven’t done (v. 16), boast in the Lord (v. 17).*
- **Ask the Group:** What do you tend to boast in more—what the world values, or what God values?

**Ask the Group:** In v. 15-16, Paul chooses not to boast in the work done by others but rather desires to preach the Gospel in new regions. Why do you think this is important to Paul?

*Leaders’ Note: Some biblical references to Paul’s work and motivations: Acts 22:21, Romans 10:14-17, Matthew 28:19-20*

*Possible Answers: Jesus commanded the spread of the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20), Paul was called to preach to the Gentiles who knew very little of God (Acts 22:21), so more people might know the truth of the Gospel and believe (Romans 10:14-17), etc.*

- **Ask the Group:** Why do you think preaching the Gospel is important?

*Leader’s Note: There probably will be overlap in these answers from the previous question, highlighting that Paul was not alone in the call to share the Gospel—his motivation should be ours as well.*

## Gospel Application

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Do you “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (vs. 5)?

- **Ask the Group (small or large):** What is one thing you can do this week to keep your thoughts captive for the Lord?

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Paul writes about the importance of sharing the Gospel in new regions. Think of one person whom you could connect with this week who doesn’t know the truth of the Gospel.

*Suggestion: Send this application question and challenge out during the week to encourage your group.*

Last Week’s Application: (Discuss if time)

**Ask the Group (small or large):** Contemplate your wealth this week and ask God how He would have you use it for his kingdom.

**Ask the Group (small or large):** How can you worship God more fully with your finances (Note: This does not necessarily mean giving more.)?

- How can you rely on God to help you overcome the obstacles you have to worship Him more fully?