

2 Corinthians 10:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present.

Analysis

Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present (τοῦτο λογίζεσθω ὁ τοιοῦτος, ὅτι οἱοί ἐσμεν τῷ λόγῳ δι' ἐπιστολῶν ἀπόντες, τοιοῦτοι καὶ παρόντες τῷ ἔργῳ)—Logizesthō (λογίζεσθω, "let him reckon/consider") is imperatival: Paul commands sober reflection. Logos (λόγῳ, "word") by letters will match ergō (ἔργῳ, "deed") in person. Paul isn't two-faced—bold at a distance, timid face-to-face. His written authority will be enforced in person if repentance doesn't occur.

This warns both the congregation and the false teachers: Paul's patience shouldn't be mistaken for weakness. He prefers gentle persuasion but will exercise apostolic discipline when necessary (13:2, 10). The consistency between letters and presence proves integrity—his authority derives from Christ, not rhetorical manipulation or personal charisma.

Historical Context

Accusations of inconsistency were serious in the ancient world—integrity required alignment between public and private, absent and present behavior. Paul's opponents suggested he was all talk, no action. He refutes this: his apostolic authority will be exercised forcefully in person if the situation requires it (cf. his confrontation of Peter in Gal 2:11-14).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How can you ensure your private convictions and public actions align—avoiding the hypocrisy of being bold at a distance but cowardly in person?
2. When is patient forbearance wise pastoral care, and when does it become failure to confront sin decisively?
3. What does Paul's consistency between words and deeds teach about integrity in Christian leadership?

Interlinear Text

τοῦτο	λογιζέσθω	ὁ	τοιοῦτοι	ὅτι	οἱοί	ἐσμεν	τῷ
this	Let	G3588	such	that	such as	we are	G3588
G5124	G3049		G5108	G3754	G3634	G2070	
λόγω	δι'	ἐπιστολῶν	ἀπόντες	τοιοῦτοι	καὶ		
in word	by	letters	when we are absent	such	will we be also		
G3056	G1223	G1992	G548	G5108	G2532		
παρόντες	τῷ	ἔργῳ					
when we are present	G3588	in deed					
G3918		G2041					

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 12:20 (Parallel theme): For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

2 Corinthians 13:10 (Parallel theme): Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.

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