

2 Corinthians 10:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But I beseech you, that I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence, wherewith I think to be bold against some, which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

Analysis

That I may not be bold when I am present with that confidence (τὸ μὴ παρὼν θαρρῆσαι)—Paul hopes to avoid confrontation but will not shrink from it if necessary. Tharrēsai (θαρρῆσαι, "to be bold/confident") appears four times in this chapter (vv. 1-2, 7), showing the tension between pastoral gentleness and apostolic authority.

Which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα περιπατοῦντας)—His opponents accused him of operating by fleshly methods—worldly wisdom, manipulation, or cowardice. Paul will demonstrate that his warfare is spiritual (kata sarka vs. kata pneuma), his weapons divine (v. 4), and his authority from God, not human credentials. The contrast between "walking" (daily conduct) and "warring" (v. 3) shows the comprehensive spiritual nature of apostolic ministry.

Historical Context

Corinth prized sophistic rhetoric, philosophical eloquence, and displays of wisdom. Paul's deliberate rejection of such methods (1 Cor 2:1-5) was misinterpreted as lack of ability or confidence. His opponents likely boasted superior credentials, impressive speaking ability, and perhaps miraculous signs to validate their authority.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What fleshly methods are you tempted to employ when spiritual weapons seem too slow or ineffective?
2. How can you distinguish between godly boldness (Spirit-empowered confrontation of sin) and fleshly aggression?
3. When others misinterpret your Spirit-led gentleness as weakness, how do you resist the urge to prove yourself by worldly means?

Interlinear Text

δέομαι	δὲ	τοὺς	μὴ	παρὼν	θαρρῆσαι	
I beseech	But	which	you that I may not	when I am present	be bold	
G1189	G1161	G3588	G3361	G3918	G2292	
τοὺς	πεποιθήσει	ἣ	λογιζομένους	τολμῆσαι	ἐπὶ	
which	with that confidence	wherewith	I think	to be bold	against	
G3588	G4006	G3739	G3049	G5111	G1909	
τινας	τοὺς	λογιζομένους	ἡμᾶς	ὥς	κατὰ	σάρκα
some	which	I think	of us	as	according	to the flesh
G5100	G3588	G3049	G2248	G5613	G2596	G4561
περιπατοῦντας						
if we walked						
G4043						

Additional Cross-References

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.

2 Corinthians 13:2 (Parallel theme): I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare:

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