

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

Psalm 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 ἥ λογιζομένους τολμῆσαι ἐπί^{της}
which with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against
G3588 G4006 G3739 G3049 G5111 G1909

τινας τοὺς λογιζομένους ἡμᾶς ὡς 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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