

2 Corinthians 10:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

Analysis

Casting down imaginations (καθαροῦντες λογισμοὺς)—Logismous (λογισμοὺς, "reasonings/arguments") denotes sophisticated intellectual constructs, philosophical systems, or rationalistic arguments. Paul targets not ignorance but educated rebellion—the mind's pretensions to autonomous authority apart from divine revelation. The verb kathaireō (καθαίρω, "cast down/destroy") is violent, suggesting thorough demolition, not gentle correction.

And every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God (καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ)—Hypsōma (ὕψωμα, "high thing/barrier") denotes anything elevated in opposition to God. Gnōsis tou theou (γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ) is not mere information but covenantal relationship and revealed truth. Paul targets intellectual pride that positions human reason above God's self-disclosure.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ)—Aichmalōtizontes (αἰχμαλωτίζοντες, "taking captive") extends the warfare metaphor: thoughts are prisoners of war, forcibly subjugated to Christ's lordship. Hypakoē (ὑπακοή, "obedience") demands complete submission—not neutral investigation but worshipful surrender of the mind to Christ's authority.

Historical Context

Greek philosophy valued autonomous reason as humanity's highest faculty. Corinth celebrated intellectual sophistication and rhetorical brilliance. Paul's demand that every thought submit to Christ scandalized both Jewish legalists (who trusted Torah observance) and Greek philosophers (who trusted human reason). The gospel assaults human pride at its core—the mind's claim to self-sufficient authority.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What 'high things'—ideologies, philosophies, or cultural assumptions—currently 'exalt themselves against the knowledge of God' in your thinking?
2. How do you practice taking 'every thought captive to Christ's obedience' when your mind rebels against biblical truth?
3. Why does Paul use warfare language (demolishing, casting down, taking captive) rather than educational language (informing, persuading, teaching)?

Interlinear Text

λογισμούς	καθαροῦντες	καὶ	πᾶν	ὑψωμα	ἐπαιρόμενον		
imagination	Casting down	and	every	high thing	that exalteth itself		
G3053	G2507	G2532	G3956	G5313	G1869		
κατὰ	τῆς	γνώσεως	τοῦ	θεοῦ	καὶ	αἰχμαλωτίζοντες	πᾶν
against	G3588	the knowledge	G3588	of God	and	bringing into captivity	every
G2596		G1108		G2316	G2532	G163	G3956
νόημα	εἰς	τὴν	ὑπακοὴν	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ		
thought	to	G3588	the obedience	G3588	of Christ		
G3540	G1519		G5218		G5547		

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 4:12 (References God): For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Isaiah 55:7 (References God): Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Romans 7:23 (Parallel theme): But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Matthew 15:19 (Parallel theme): For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

1 Corinthians 3:19 (References God): For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.

Jeremiah 4:14 (Parallel theme): O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

Romans 1:21 (References God): Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

1 Corinthians 1:19 (Parallel theme): For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

Psalms 139:2 (Parallel theme): Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

Proverbs 15:26 (Parallel theme): The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.

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