

When somebody reads through a passage of Scripture and sees something that is a big deal to the author, they ought to stop and make a big deal of it—particularly as the people of God need the message of God as it was first given. Maybe, we should start by reminding ourselves of what Paul says the Gospel is (1 Corinthians 15:1-10).

1. The Gospel causes us to give (9:13).
2. The Gospel causes us to go (10:14-16).
3. The Gospel causes us to guard/grapple against counterfeits (11:1-5).
 - a. Paul actually believes this is a spiritual altercation (10:4-5).
 - b. There is a future (this makes a lot of sense in relation to 5:10-11 & 5:20). Have you noticed—whether 1:12-14 or here—Paul is preoccupied with looking at things from the perspective of the future?
4. The Gospel causes me to go without alot.
 - a. Paul went without resources (11:7-8).
 - b. Paul went without both safety and health (11:23-28).

10:2-5

2 But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. “I would prefer to stay as gentle as I usually am when I am with you instead of becoming bold—almost brash—as I am in these letters.”

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, Paul is both defending His uniqueness as Christ’s apostle¹ and implying that the enemies (the “some” of verse 2) who are in and among the Corinthians church—and later identified as “false apostles” (11:13-15)—are actually spiritual enemies of God. The Gospel draws demonic resistance in the form of people. Paul contends that he doesn’t need to bring carnality to this fight, but rather **weapons** which are actually **mighty** for the task of dealing with these imposters. **5 casting down arguments and every high thing high-sounding opinion that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,** Paul is furthermore saying that these so-called **arguments** brought on by the “some” of verse 2 are against the real **Christ**. Now, this is not a surprise since the next chapter talks to us about the **Christ** of the “false apostles” (11:3-4; 11:13-15). Now, how can these “some” (verse 2) be so formidable that they require **weapons** which are **mighty in God** and that they actually argue against submission to the real **Christ**? It must be empowered by a spiritual power; 11:4 says it is a “different spirit” that empowers the “false apostle” to preach his/her “other gospel” (11:4) of “another Christ” (11:4).²

10:6

and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. Again, Paul promises that he will bring judgment down on these “some” (verse 2) after the whole of the Corinthian church smashes these contrary opinions of Christ and His Gospel that Paul preached. Paul’s response on the enemy no doubt dwarfs that “clearing response” of 7:11 performed by the church herself. This is the kind of urgency and accountability that are wrapped up in Paul’s gospel-centered approach to life.

10:12-13

¹ He basically restates it in verses 7-11 with verse 7 restating verses 2-3, verse 8 restating verse 4, and verses 9-11 contending not only for his approach but also warning them that they could get the “other Paul approach” if things don’t change prior to his arrival. He almost appears to be saying “I already told you we don’t want to get crazy when we are with you (verse 2), but we’ll bring our boldness that expresses itself in our letters the next time we see you if we have to do so.”

² I find **Strategic Level Spiritual Warfare** at first very repugnant. I have seen this idea of spiritual involvement heavily abused, and have therefore resisted it—having deemed it virtually laughable. However, when I consider references such as Ezekiel 28:10 and Daniel 10:13, I must admit that there is something to these ideas of national or regional hierarchy.

12 For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. The Gospel draws misplaced measurements of maturity. In other words, when the Gospel is too simple (11:3) we must find other ways to measure our worth; to measure our contribution to God; to measure our maturity.

But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. Here is the tragedy of misplaced measuring sticks. We are not to be measuring ourselves with others who work in our world, but we are to measuring ourselves against what we are supposed to be doing with what God has given us...or **appointed us**. In this case, these false apostles and misleading teachers compare themselves—not with the message delivered by Christ through His apostles—but by other standards within their own group. Maybe it was because they could do miracles (11:13-15) that they did not consider their message, but it seems that this is so contextually. They looked at results amongst each other instead of the meat of their message and the condition of their hearts.

10:14-18

14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; this rings quite true with 1 Corinthians 4:10, except now he is not contending for attention among fellow Gospel preachers, now he is contending against those who preach a “false Gospel” (11:1-4). **15 not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment.** Having now mentioned the Gospel twice in two verses, it seems that this has much to do with Paul’s argument. “I got to you and beyond you with the true Gospel. It seems like I’ve earned the right to be heard by you first and foremost.” By the way, he’s going even beyond that: he speaks of using their maturity—their mature handling of resources—to reach more people once they finally grow up a little. A church has levels of maturity and can handle things only as they, by and large, grasp certain truths.

“The NIV translation suggests that Paul wants his work to expand among them. But he states in 10:16 that his goal is to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. In Rom 15:24 we learn that he intends to go to Rome and then on to Spain. Clearly, he wants to settle the problems with the Corinthians so that he can concentrate on missionary endeavors elsewhere with their support. If Paul constantly has to be putting out back fires, he cannot move on to new work. But he expresses confidence that the Corinthians’ faith will indeed grow. This will allow his area of activity to expand, not in Corinth, but in territory beyond them.”³

17 But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” Here again is a repeat of his letter from one year ago (or less; 1 Corinthians 1:31).

11:5-9

5 For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things. Here, Paul admits his expertise is in knowledge rather than rhetoric. He isn’t saying he was not a good speaker, but rather that his concentration wasn’t in professional oratory, but in proclamation of truth.⁴

7 Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? If one was a professional rhetorical speaker, they would exact a fee from their listeners for the “knowledge” they imparted.⁵

³ David E. Garland, 2 *Corinthians*, vol. 29, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 456–457.

⁴ _____, *NIV Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 1897.

⁵Ibid.

It should be apparent to the reader that the **Gospel of God** being preached is a big deal having seen it as a major part of his argument in 10:14-15—three times in 11 verses.