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The Divine Battle Strategy

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II Corinthians 10:1-18 ¹Now by the mildness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am humble when face to face with you, but bold when away. ²I beg you that when I come I may not need to be as bold as I expect toward those who presume that we live according to the flesh. ³For though we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. ⁴The weapons of our warfare are not the weapons of the world. Instead, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. ⁵We tear down arguments and every presumption set up against the knowledge of God; and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. ⁶And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete. ⁷You are looking at outward appearances. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should remind himself that we belong to Christ just as much as he does. ⁸For even if I boast somewhat excessively about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed. ⁹I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you by my letters. ¹⁰For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but his physical presence is unimpressive, and his speaking is of no account.” ¹¹Such people should consider that what we are in our letters when absent, we will be in our actions when present. ¹²We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they show their ignorance. ¹³We, however, will not boast beyond our limits, but only within the field of influence that God has assigned to us—a field that reaches even to you. ¹⁴We are not overstepping our bounds, as if we had not come to you. Indeed, we were the first to reach you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵Neither do we boast beyond our limits in the labors of others. But we hope that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you will greatly increase as well, ¹⁶so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. Then we will not be boasting in the work already done in another man’s territory. ¹⁷Rather, “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” ¹⁸For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

- A. The context here is that there were other **apostles** who were telling the Corinthians that they did not have to listen to Paul. **II Corinthians 12:11** “I have become a fool, but you drove me to it. In fact, you should have commended me, since I am in no way inferior to those “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing.” (BSB) This is who is being referred to in verse 12 of this passage.

B. Paul lays out his strategy of spiritual warfare.

- He doesn't use brute strength. V. 1-2
- He uses a truth encounter approach. He uses truth to demolish spiritual strongholds. V. 3-4
- The battle is over the minds of those whom our enemy controls. V. 5
- He enforces godly behavioral standards among those who fall under his authority. V. 6
- He doesn't judge by outward appearance, but he looks at people's hearts. V.7
- He functions within the authority that God has given him. V. 8, 13-14

C. Paul respects the realm of ministry that God has given to others. V. 15

D. Paul's ministry has a God-centered focus. V. 16-18

II. How can we apply these truths to our life?

- A.** We are to listen to the Scripture that Paul wrote. Many have dismissed it in this generation.
- B.** We must seek God's forgiveness for any arrogance on our part regarding spiritual battle.
- C.** We must deal with strongholds in our own minds before we tackle other's issues. What are our Great Disconnects? What are our pet peeves? What past trauma still controls us?
- D.** Our behavior is related to where our minds are. What areas of bondage do you deal with?
- E.** How do we view others?
- F.** What authority structures do we have in our life, and do we honor those who are in authority over us?