

*Commended by God*  
*2 Corinthians 10:1 -18*

*It is common for all of us to seek approval for our actions. As children, we longed for the affirmation of our parents. As we grew older, we also valued the opinions of our friends, colleagues, and employers. At times, the esteem of others can claim such importance that it becomes our way to measure our worth as a person.*

*Paul said that he was not striving to obtain the approval of people. Some of his critics thought their criticisms could determine what he did. Yet these same people were praising themselves for their own opinions and behavior. They were seeking the approval of others, and they were receiving it.*

*Jesus said that those who seek to gain the approval of others "have their own reward" (Matt. 6:2-5). Paul, too, realized that achieving the praise of others is not difficult, but earning God's approval is a far greater accomplishment. The affirmation "Well done!" that Jesus received from the Father became Paul's goal as well (2 Tim. 2:3-5). Paul knew that self-approval is not hard to attain. Paul himself had once been pleased with his own life, until he came to realize that the righteousness he was so proud of was mere rubbish in the kingdom of God (Phil. 3:8). After his conversion, Paul understood that God's evaluation of his actions was what mattered, not his own opinion of himself.*

*Whose opinion matters most to you? Have you become complacent, enjoying the approval of those around you? Have you become satisfied with your estimation of the way you are living? The commendation that matters most is the one that comes from God. The pleasure that your life gives to God should be your motivation to live righteously. Blackaby*

- I. The strongholds that hold the heart captive to the world come from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. They are strongholds that must be pulled down in order to make every thought obedient to Christ. The world's reckonings and mental constructs/edifices will have undue influence over the body of Christ and our lives if we are not willing to show no mercy and destroy them.

2 Cor. 10:1-5

2 Cor. 11:13-15

1 Jn. 2:15-17

- II. The attitudes that release God's power to demolish the strongholds of the flesh are humility ("*inwrought grace of the soul*") and kindness ("*An active dealing with others with fairness, moderation, gentleness, sweet reasonableness*"). They are powerful weapons that build people up instead of tearing them down. They show an inner strength that comes from Christ. It's his strength, and it enables us to deal forcefully with every pretension/self-importance/arrogant mindset that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.

2 Cor. 10:6-11

Col. 3:12

Phil. 4:4

**Philippians 2:1-2** *1Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.*

- III. A root sin that cause a lot of damage to relationships and to the church is pride. God hates it! If a believer fails to recognize it as a stronghold, and if they fail to make every effort to rid it from their hearts then they will reap what they've sown through broken relationships and a loss of blessings from Christ himself.

2 Cor. 10:12-18

1 Jn. 4:1

Prov. 6:16-18

Prov. 16:18

Prov. 16:5

Ps. 101:5

Lk. 16:15

Jer. 9:23-24

**Galatians 6:14** *May I never boast except in the cross of our LORD Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

**Psalms 34:2** *My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the humble hear and be glad.*