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The Exercise of Apostolic Authority

10: 1-11

The **Corinthians'** regard for **Paul** had been steadily undermined both by actions on **his** part that **they** had misinterpreted, and by the invasion of **rivals** (to see link click [Af](#) - **The Problem of the False Apostles**) who made inroads by mockingly comparing **Paul** to **themselves**. Because those **mischief makers** had met with an embarrassing measure of success, **Paul** found **himself** in the uncomfortable position of having to defend **himself** against **their** annoying smear campaign and to explain **his** behavior as **an apostle**.²⁰³



Paul's opponents had leveled the accusation against **him** that **he** lacked integrity since **he** presented **himself** as a ferocious lion who would only roar when **he** was far off in the woods, but was a timid lamb and would turn tail whenever **he** was confronted **face-to-face** (10:1-2, 9-11). **Paul** points out that **his enemies**, who judge **him** on the basis of human standards (10:2-3), have misread **him** and **his** ministry, seeing as "weakness" what should have been understood as **Messiah's** powerful "meekness." Evidently, some of **the Corinthians themselves** had joined in this misstep by judging **him** according to outward appearances (10:7a). Yet, using warfare language, **Paul** assures them that the boldness with which **he** writes will match the power of **God**, displayed in action when **he** sees **the Corinthians** face-to-face (10:2 and 11). Those who stand against **him** will be punished (10:6). But **he** is not trying to intimidate **the church**; rather, **his** boldness is meant for



their spiritual good **(10:8-9)**. Nevertheless, **they** will only be built up as **they** submit **themselves** in full obedience to **his** leadership **(10:6)**.²⁰⁴