

1Corinthians 16:10-14 "Principles for Powerful Living"

**1 Corinthians 16:10-14** <sup>10</sup> Now if Timothy comes, see that he is with you without cause to be afraid, for he is doing the Lord's work, as I also am. <sup>11</sup> So let no one despise him. But send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I expect him with the brethren. <sup>12</sup> But concerning Apollos our brother, I encouraged him greatly to come to you with the brethren; and it was not at all *his* desire to come now, but he will come when he has opportunity. <sup>13</sup> Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. <sup>14</sup> Let all that you do be done in love.

As we continue to wind down this letter from Paul his concluding thoughts now turn to two fellow servants found in Timothy and Apollos, both of whom Paul wants to minister to these Corinthian believers.

Evidently this letter precedes Timothy as he is traveling overland through Macedonia whereas this letter probably went straight across the Aegean sea from Asia to Achaia. And so, Paul wants to prepare these Corinthians so that when Timothy does come they will be exhorted to accept him as one who is there to minister.

Now keep in mind that Timothy is a rather young man and for a young man to assume the role of a leader could very well have created problems inherent with youth. There might be the temptation not to take Timothy seriously, or maybe to take advantage of him, or intimidate him.

Paul understood this and yet he makes it clear that despite his youth Timothy is called into service just as much as Paul was, though in somewhat a different capacity.

1CO 16:10 "If Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am."

Now, the question might be asked, why in the world would Timothy have anything to fear, especially from fellow Christians? Well, unfortunately, even Christians can sometimes be rather cruel and without mercy. Paul knew what Timothy was walking into and yet he has no reservations about sending him to Corinth.

And so, Paul essentially says that 'you Corinthians had better not give any reason for Timothy to fear you in any way.'

Now, if this were turned around, to where a false teacher or prophet were coming into their midst, then that person would have reason to fear being exposed and turned away from their fellowship. In a sense this is the kind of fear that Paul didn't want Timothy to experience simply because he may not have been known by them.

This is why Paul puts his stamp of approval on Timothy so that they know that he is a servant of the most High God who is to be respected and honored for the work that he's doing. And what is that work? Paul says in verse 10 that "he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am."

What was the work of the Lord for Paul? Paul's work involved bringing the gospel into many regions; it involved discipling the sheep and instructing them according to the word of God. It involved encouraging the flock of Christ to consider how they might be better servants for the Lord.

Now, Timothy was not an apostle and therefore his ministry would be different from Paul's in certain respects. But Paul makes absolutely no distinction in purpose when it comes to Timothy going out and representing Paul in his ministry.

Those things that Paul would have done regarding their growth in Christ, Timothy has been sent to do. And by the way, Timothy had a heart to minister to the churches which Paul had established. We see this clearly when Paul wrote to the Philippians.

PHI 2:19-20 "I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare."

Timothy was content to be Paul's helper in any way he could and he genuinely looked to the welfare of all of those believers. This is why we often hear the expression among Pastors that if they only had a Timothy in their congregation the ministry would be so much more productive.

Paul was blessed by God to have a young man willing to be his servant. And Timothy gloried in the opportunity to serve whenever and wherever the Lord wanted to use him in being that support for Paul.

And the last thing Paul wanted was to have anyone, especially other believers, look down on Timothy simply because of his youthfulness.

1CO 16:11 "No one, then, should refuse to accept him. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers."

It's apparent that Timothy was not going to spend a great deal of time in Corinth, but for the time he was there he was to be treated in Christian love and sent on his way in peace, so that he could return to Paul and encourage him with the news of how he had ministered to these Corinthians, and how they responded to that exhortation according to the word of God.

In this way these Corinthians would be respecting the wishes of Paul as they respected Timothy, if not for who he was, then certainly for the work he was doing. William Barclay puts it well when he says, "it is not the man who glorifies the work but the work which glorifies the man. There is no dignity like the dignity of a great task."

And for men who are doing the work of the Lord today there should be a respect for them for precisely the same reason. If it is the Lord who calls them, and they are faithful to carry out the task, then it would be calling into question the Lord Jesus Himself who called such a servant if we were to disrespect such a person.

This is what we've been studying on Thursday evenings in Exodus with Moses. It wasn't because Moses was a particularly wonderful leader at the outset of his ministry that God desired for Israel to follow him, though God would develop Moses into a great leader.

What made Moses head and shoulders above the rest is that God placed him in that position and he was willing to follow the Lord, and the strength and might of the Lord was used through Moses.

And in essence, to disobey Moses, as he spoke for the Lord, was to disobey the Lord Himself. In fact, this is precisely what Jesus told the 70 who were sent out to preach the kingdom of God.

LUK 10:16 "He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me."

And so, to be a representative for Christ is really an extension of Christ Himself. To be a servant of the Lord, in a capacity of

exhorting and encouraging the body of Christ with the word of God, as did Timothy, is to be a servant used of Christ Himself.

This is one reason James points out how important it is to know what the Lord is doing in your life and then pursuing it with your eyes wide open, not presuming upon God.

JAM 3:1 "Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

Paul was really doing the Corinthians a favor by exhorting them to consider how they treat his servant and the servant of Christ Himself who was called to such a high calling.

The next person Paul mentions is Apollos.

1CO 16:12 "Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity."

You'll remember that Apollos was the man who was instrumental in ministering to the Corinthian church in or around the time Paul left them the first time. He was different from Paul in that he was evidently an eloquent man, whereas Paul was a man who describes himself in this very letter as one who "did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as [he] proclaimed to [them] the testimony about God." (1CO 2:)

It was Apollos whom some of the Corinthians aligned themselves with while others aligned themselves with Paul. And so, there was this division which was brought about among the Corinthians as they grouped together around these two men claiming that they were of Paul, or they were of Apollos.

It is this same Apollos whom Paul encouraged greatly or strongly urged, according to verse 12, to go to Corinth. Now why would Paul want Apollos to go to Corinth? I thought he was part of the cause of division there. Apollos never caused any division. He and Paul were on the same page. It was the immaturity of the Corinthians that created an environment of alienation.

Paul feels strongly that Apollos would help to bring back some stability to that church and in so doing would confirm Christ's choice of Paul and his role in being the apostle to the Gentiles. But it looks like Apollos isn't willing to put himself through that torture again at this point.

1CO 16:12 "... He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity."

For whatever reason, despite Paul's insistence that it would be good for the Corinthian believers to have him there, Apollos is not willing to go. It doesn't mean he isn't willing to go later, but right now is not good for him. He might be waiting for some of the craziness to calm down before going back. He might be involved in other aspects of ministry that he simply can't get away from right now.

But the bottom line is that Paul sees Apollos as an integral part of his ministry and would love to see him used in the lives of these Corinthians. He was a man who was a worker and when he put his hand to the plow he didn't let go until he finished. And he was a man who took the time to learn the Scriptures so as to teach people about Christ.

ACT 18:27-28 "When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. 28 For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ."

Now, after Paul has mentioned his desire to send both Timothy and Apollos to Corinth, he now turns his attention back to the Corinthians.

1CO 16:13-14 "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. 14 Do everything in love."

We've got five commands here from Paul. The first four are similar in tone to orders a commander would give his army.

The NASB says, to "be on the alert", while the KJV and the NKJV suggest to watch. The Greek word "can mean to watch, be awake, be vigilant and figuratively, be alive." (John MacArthur)

"The term is used 22 times in the New Testament, often in reference to Christians being spiritually awake and alert, as opposed to being spiritually indifferent and listless." (MacArthur)

If you look at the bulk of this letter to the Corinthians they were anything but spiritually awake. They were essentially in a spiritual stupor. And so, they were anything but alert. And to be alert in

the spiritual sense is to be alert to the battle which rages around you.

If we're going to be alert we need to understand how a soldier of Christ must understand his role in this battle as one who must be alert.

John MacArthur has an excellent section in his commentary on 1 Corinthians as he deals with this issue of being alert. He suggests that the New Testament deals with at least 6 important things we are to watch out for, or for which to be on the alert.

The first one is to be on the alert against Satan.

1PE 5:8-9 "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith,..."

To understand the war in which we're engaged it is a good idea to understand your enemy; his strengths and weaknesses along with his strategies. And his strategies really haven't changed that much over the time he's been around tempting people. The apostle John identifies them.

**1 John 2:16** <sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the *lust of the flesh* and the *lust of the eyes* and the *boastful pride of life*, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And so, we are to be watchful concerning the lust of the flesh and take care not to fall into its trap. We are to be watchful concerning the lust of the eyes, and avoid the temptation not to fall in love with the world and the things it offers. And we're to be watchful not to let our own selfishness get in the way of what it means to consider others as more important than ourselves.

But there's a second way in which we need to watch and that has to do with being watchful in prayer. Our Lord Jesus points this out.

MAR 14:38 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

If we're not watchful as we seek the Lord in prayer we may not even be aware of the temptation when it comes.

The third area in which we need to be alert has to do with our apathy and indifference. "By definition, a person who is apathetic and indifferent is insensitive and therefore cannot be alert. The church at Sardis assumed that it had spiritual life because it had a

name that it was alive, but it was so indifferent to the Lord's will that it did not realize it was dead." (MacArthur)

But what did the Lord say to them?

REV 3:2-3 "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you."

We can't afford to be asleep at the wheel when it comes to the spiritual battle, because other people depend on us and our gifts. Paul says, be alert.

The fourth aspect to this alertness has to do with being alert to false teachers, and even Timothy was warned by Paul to be alert to this destructive tactic by the enemy.

2TI 4:3-5 "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations,..."

The NASB interprets verse 5 of 2Tim. 4 in this way. "But you, be sober in all things." The NKJV says, "But you, be watchful in all things."

If we're not watchful when it comes to false teachers and their teachings we'll simply assume that one teaching is as good as another and ultimately we'll find ourselves behind spiritual bars once the enemy has lulled us to sleep as we close our eyes to the truth.

But there are some positive things we must watch for, not the least of which is prayer as mentioned earlier. We must watch and pray. But there is also another positive thing we must watch for according to MacArthur, and that is the Lord's return.

MAT 24:42 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

We know that the day of the Lord will come like a thief and as Peter says, in light of this future coming of the Lord, what kind of people ought you to be? (2Pe3:11)

Be alert.

Paul also tells us in verse 13, "stand firm in the faith." The kind of faith Paul is talking about here is not the specific faith we exercised when we originally trusted in Christ. Rather the faith he addresses here is that body of teaching delivered by the prophets and apostles which address not only our salvation but the way in which we grow in this salvation.

"Satan cannot take saving faith away from us, but he can, and often does, obscure the content of our faith, the sound doctrines of God's word. If we do not hold fast to right interpretations of Scripture, we are certain to slip into wrong thinking, wrong belief, and wrong behavior." (MacArthur)

It's only as we are willing to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as we are Bereans, studying the word of God, that we can become mature. And this is why Paul adds, in verse 13, "be men of courage."

The NKJV simply puts it, "be brave." But I like the way the NASB puts it when it says, "act like men."

"The basic idea is that of mature courage. The mature person has a sense of control, confidence, and courage that the immature or childish person does not have. Paul had already pleaded with [the Corinthians when he said] Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults." 1CO 14:20 (MacArthur)

"Maturity is one of the marks of love (1Cor.13:11). Love strives for maturity in all good things -- in doctrine, in spiritual insight, in emotional stability and control, in personal relationships, in moral purity, and in all the fruit of the Spirit." (MacArthur)

EPH 4:11-13, 15 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, ***so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.***<BR>15 ... speaking the truth in love, ***we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.***"

The way in which this maturity is accomplished is through the word of God; not only hearing it but doing what it says. Not to do what it says is not maturity.

1PE 2:2-3 "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that ***by it you may grow up in your salvation***, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good."

2TI 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 ***so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***"

The last part of verse 13 of our text is similar to "be men of courage" as Paul says, be strong, or be strengthened.

We often talk about being spiritually strong but how do we accomplish this? Well, Paul tells us in his epistle to the Ephesians.

EPH 6:10 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power."

But how do we be strong in the Lord? Here's the irony of ironies. We are strong in the Lord as we understand and acknowledge that we are weak in and of ourselves. Paul himself had to learn this. And it was a lesson he took to heart and actually learned to rejoice in.

2CO 12:7-10 "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

But you know, "we can no more be spiritually strong than we can be physically strong without self-discipline. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable (1Co.9:25). We grow in strength as we use our strength."  
(MacArthur)

COL 1:10-11 "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,..."

Like the psalmist we need to say, "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD." (PSA 27:14)

The last thing Paul adds to this list is what we find in verse 14.

1CO 16:14 "Do everything in love."

Remember, Paul has spent an entire chapter dealing with agape, the love of God shed abroad in our lives.

John MacArthur wraps up this section in his commentary with these words. "Love compliments and balances everything else. It is the beautiful softening principle. It keeps our firmness from becoming hardness and our strength from becoming domineering. It keeps our maturity gentle and considerate. It keeps our right doctrine from becoming obstinate dogmatism and our right living from becoming smug self-righteousness."

This is what Peter had in mind when he encouraged the saints.

1PE 4:8 "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

As we are alert to the schemes of the enemy and we have the maturity and strength to say yes to Christ and no to self and the world as we hold firm in our faith, we'll find that that love, which is from God, will be the thing we keep seeking from above. And as we love our God with all our hearts, souls and minds, it won't be that difficult to love one another. It will be a natural expression of a supernatural relationship we have with our heavenly Father in Christ.