

# correcting carnality

1 CORINTHIANS

## Sermon Series Notes



### "Ministry, People, Problems, & Perseverance" (I Corinthians 16:5-24)

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Intro: Of all the churches to which Paul wrote, there was none quite like Corinth. The carnality, divisions, the strained relationship with Paul himself. No other church received the kind of rebuke that Paul gave to this church. But none received any greater loving counsel.

vv.5-7 Please note that last line "if the Lord permits." For someone looking to use the Lord as an excuse for not following through on a commitment, this is a great line! But when spoken by someone with a sincere heart, it is a statement that reveals someone who is open to the Lord giving daily direction in life, direction that may change at a moment's notice.

\* John 3: 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

\* OT in the wilderness, they would not move until the cloud moved

\* I Cor.2: 15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:  
16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

\* Some in the church at Corinth judged Paul because he did not visit them when he thought he would (see II Cor.1:17-18). Why? (See II Cor.1:23-2:1-2). Paul says he was led of the Lord to not go when he had originally planned, because the visit would have been painful both for them and himself. The pain would have been because the church was still filled with carnality.

\* How are we to make decisions (in life and ministry)?

1. Submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit (Rom.8:14)
2. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart (Col.3:15; See II Cor.2:12-13).
3. In keeping with God's will as revealed in His Word
4. With flexibility (James 4:13-15)

\* Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be broken."

\* Illus: New church plants & their specific plans

vv.8-9 When God opens a door for "effective" ministry, expect opposition.

\* If there is no opposition, you most likely went through the wrong door!

\* The ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19): Paul taught boldly for three months in the synagogue, then some became obstinate and he was forced to move to the lecture hall of Tyrannus. For two whole years he continued to speak the Word daily at this hall. Acts 19:10 says that after two years, everyone in the province of Asia had heard "the Word of the Lord." Then a silversmith named Demetrius called a union meeting, because sales of the silver shrines to Artemis (which he made) had plummeted, all because of Paul's "effective" ministry in town. Demetrius' words got the whole city into an uproar, and for two hours they shouted "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." The rioting mob grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus (two of Paul's ministry team) and rushed into the local theater. Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. When the riot ended, Paul left town.

vv.10-11 Paul is obviously concerned about how Timothy will be received by the church at Corinth. There is already a contingency in the church that have issues with Paul. And Timothy is Paul's assistant. Timothy is also younger than Paul, and in that sense an easy target.

\* See II Tim.1:4-8; I Cor.4:15-21

\* Note: Those people you did not want to deal with, perhaps people that someone else in authority has dealt with up to this point. Hey, if you are going to move on as a leader in life & ministry, you will one day have to deal with them! (It's that way in ministry, parenting life).

\* You are going to have problems with people if you are at all involved with people!

\* Illus: "The Pastor & The Choir Director"

v.12 On Apollos, see Acts 18:24-26

\* Paul really wanted Apollos to go with Timothy and the others (and I'm certain Timothy wanted him to go!), but Paul did not have the kind of authority over Apollos that he had over Timothy. So Paul could not "order" Apollos to go. And you can feel his frustration at not being able to convince him to go.

\* Have you ever wanted someone to move in a direction you were convinced they should, but they were "quite unwilling" to move in that direction?

v.13 What an interesting verse to throw in at this point!

\* As you keep your guard up, stand firm, remain courageous, keep up your strength, make sure that you don't become the kind of strong courageous Christian that loses the basic and essential motive of love in all you do.

\* I have been in situations where the person on the other end of my authority did not feel a lot of love from me. I have at times been stern. I have been unbending. But my "unbending sternness" came from a heart of love.

\* I don't think any of my children felt love when I spanked them, etc.

\* Rev.3: 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.

\* Note: The third phrase "be men of courage" in the KJV is "quit you like men." See I Cor.3:3-4, where Paul says that in their immaturity they were acting like "mere men." Paul is encouraging them here to "grow up."

vv.15-16 Take note of those who have been saved longer than you, have weathered the storms, and continue to labor in and for the church.

\* I Cor.1:16 tells us that Paul baptized Stephanas & his family.

\* The Greek word for translated "devoted" conveys the idea of addiction. Paul was saying that Stephanas & his family were ministry addicts. I like that.

\* What does it mean to submit to such as these? (v.16) It means to listen to them, be like them.

vv.17-18 Thank God that in the midst of all the challenges, God has those He uses to refresh us, usually just when we need it most.

\* "Recognition" means respect.

vv.19-20 Thank God for the family you are part of. This family extends far beyond the church in Corinth.

v.21 Paul usually had someone dictate his letters, but he would at times make sure he added a very personal greeting. This greeting not only authenticated the letter, but was also a testimony of Paul's love and affection for the people in the church of Corinth.

v.22a Anathema = "be damned." Paul is not cursing the lost here. Rather, he is warning those in the church. He says "If anyone does not love the Lord," he is damned. For the first time in any of Paul's letters, he uses the Greek word "phileo" here. Phileo of course is one of several Greek words for love, this one meaning "affection" or "friendship." What he is saying is clear. Christianity is not just a philosophy or set of doctrines. Christianity is a relationship with a Person. And if you do not have a "phileo" relationship with Jesus Christ, you have missed the core reality of Christianity.

\* " it is out of personal devotion to the Lord Jesus, and out of that alone spring all the implications of the Christian life" (Redpath, p.243).

\* My Utmost for His Highest, Feb.23

v.22b Maranatha = "Come oh Lord" or "Our Lord is Coming." This was a common exchange between believers in this day. With all the struggles they faced, they needed regular reminders that their future was bright, and they longed for the day when they would see Him again!

\* Paul longed for the coming of the Lord, when all the problems would be over!

\* Phil.1: 23 I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;

24 but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.

vv.23-24 Paul ends by stating that he loved all of them. That love was evidenced by his stern rebuke & godly counsel (see I Cor.3:1-3; 4:8, 14, 18-21; 5:1-2; 6:4-5a, 13; chapters 7-8, 10; 11:17, 30; chapters 12-14).

## CONCLUSION

\* What's your five year plan in life? Have you considered that those plans might not be God's plans. Submit to the leading of the H.S., let the peace of Christ rule in your heart, don't violate the will of God revealed in His Word, & learn to be flexible (Blessed are the flexible ). When making plans, add that little phrase "the Lord willing" or "if the Lord permits."

\* Looking for an open door for ministry. God's open doors will always include opposition. So if there's no opposition, maybe you chose the wrong door? And if you've already walked through the right door - why are you surprised?

\* Do you have respect for those "over you in the Lord?" Perhaps God has sent a Timothy to you, someone who represents an authority over you in the Lord. How have you received them? If they represent the higher authority, then respect them the same as you would the higher authority.

\* You feel strongly that someone should move in a particular direction, but you have no authority over that person. You may have "strongly urged them" in this regard, but they were "quite unwilling" to go in that direction. You could cop an attitude, but the wise thing would be to leave it in the Lord's hands.

\* In the midst of all your struggles, watch out. It's a good time for the enemy to pull you down. Stand firm don't let the challenges of life/ ministry cause you to get off track

\* By the way, some of you just need to "grow up."

\* And when you tell someone to "grow up," make sure your motive is love. As a matter of fact, make sure that's your motive in everything you do (love for God, and love for people).

\* Take note of those who have been saved longer than you, those who have weathered the storms, and have become "addicted to ministry." You can learn a lot from these saints, and they will refresh your spirit.

\* Never take for granted the tremendous privilege of being a part of God's family. It is not a perfect family, but it will be one day!

\* Examine yourselves to make sure you are in the faith. Do you have a "phileo" *relationship* with Jesus Christ?

\* Never lose sight of the glorious future that is ours.

## CONCLUSION

1. If making decisions, always add "If the lord wills." And don't expect everyone to agree with your decisions.
2. If making decisions that are led of the Lord, expect opposition.
3. Realize you're going to have problems with people if you're involved with people.
4. Know that you cannot determine God's will for other people (things not black and white as revealed in the Word).
5. Don't give up, grow up.
6. Learn from seasoned saints who have become ministry addicts.
7. Thank God for making you part of His family.
8. Make sure you are part of the family.
9. Never lose sight of your glorious future.
10. Know that I love you in the Lord.