

The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 65, 1st Corinthians 16:13-14, "Concluding Remarks"

✍ Today we are going to be saying a fond farewell to our study of 1st Corinthians as we consider Paul's final words to this church. He's spent the majority of this letter either correcting or rebuking the Corinthian church in some form or fashion. Paul concludes with an exhortation in 1st Corinthians 16:13-14, "Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong. And do everything with love." Strong words with military overtones as Paul uses only 12 Greek words to communicate his final thoughts. It is almost as if he is saying, "Come on Corinthians, this isn't a Sunday School picnic, this is a war." In a similar tone, he concludes his letter to the Ephesian church in Ephesians 6:10-12. Do you believe Paul? Did you start this day on your knees praying for yourself and the ones you love? Polished the sword of His Word so you could use it deftly in your life? Put on the whole armor of God because you know what's really going on and what really matters? We demonstrate what we believe by what we do. Those who hold to and practice with sobriety the command of these verses in Ephesians are branded as fundamentalists who see demons behind every rock. We can classify believers into three categories, those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who have no idea what's happening. Many don't seem to know there is a battle all around them, because if they did, their focus would be different, and their time would be spent differently.

1. Let's listen as Paul exhorts us to battle, 1st Corinthians 16:13.

- ✓ Be spiritually awake! It is easy to be spiritually asleep, a sleeping soldier is a conquered one, see 1st Peter 5:8 and Ephesians 6:16-18. We need to be watchful and awake about the devil and his schemes. Awake to the slide of biblical doctrine, "For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will reject the truth and chase after myths," 2nd Timothy 4:3-5.

2. Stand fast in the faith

- ✓ Conquering new ground is unnecessary, holding the ground conquered is our call. All the armor of Ephesians 6 is for standing not advancing, we cannot advance God's victory because it is already complete. The temptation in battle is to run but notice there is no armor for your back, Ephesians 6:13. Are we standing in faith or are we giving up ground? Sin is still sin?

3. Be brave.

- ✓ The King James says, "Quit you like men" the Greek says, "Play the man." This is not gender specific. It is just simply stating that no matter our gender we need to fight like mature men, Ephesians 4:11-15, be mature.

4. Be strong.

- ✓ This is in the passive voice, be strengthened, 2nd Timothy 2:1. Go to Christ for strength. When we don't go, what does it say? We are convinced we can make it without Him.

5. Do everything in love.

- ✓ Not just with love but in love like it is the atmosphere that we are breathing. Think of love as our gas mask and without it we breath noxious fumes of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. Without it we are nothing and will get wiped out.
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