

## **Sermon 78: Practical Ministry Principles: 1 Corinthians 16:5-12**

**Text: 1 Corinthians 16:5-12** "Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit. But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time..."

### **Introduction:**

- **From the context, it appears that Paul is currently ministering in Ephesus.**
- **In Acts 16 he was initially forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia, the region of Ephesus.**
  - He was twice forbidden
  - He was once directed by a vision to go to Macedonia.
- **After Paul obeyed the vision, he experienced one ministry disappointment after another: Acts 16-17**
  - Driven out of Philippi
  - Driven out of Thessalonica
  - Driven out of Berea
- **After another disappointment in Athens, he finally planted himself in Corinth for about 18 months.**
- **This letter was being written near the end of his time of his nearly 3-year ministry in Ephesus.**
- **This journey through Macedonia and Achaia was to encourage the churches and to secure the collection gathered up by the churches to be sent to Jerusalem.**
- **After going to Jerusalem, Paul endeavored to move to a new phase of ministry in Rome and then to Spain.**

**Summary:** Paul's closing words give us a simple look into how he approached ministry.

**Proposition:** We must incorporate these principles into our ministry relationships.

### **Principle 1: Prioritize maintaining spiritual relationships: 16:5:-7**

"Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go. For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you..."

- **Basic explanation:**

- Paul was not a pastor, but he had a pastor's heart.
- He was receiving the collections of the churches for the Jerusalem church.
- He was also taking time to encourage these churches.
- He had just written a very difficult letter, yet he wanted to spend significant time with the church.
- He wanted to time his trip to Corinth so he would winter-over in the city.

- **He wanted to minister to them:**

- He arranged his schedule so he could spend significant time with them.
- He could have easily planned to avoid them, knowing the relationship was strained.
- He chose spiritual wellbeing over comfort.

- **This principle should shape our lives as well:**

- Put people's growth ahead of your personal agendas.
- Slow down the pace of life and invest in the people around you.
- Recognize that maintaining these kinds of relationships takes time and effort.

### **Principle 2: Hold your plans humbly: 16:7 "If the Lord permit..."**

- **Paul expressed the concept of "if the Lord wills" in several places:**

- **1 Corinthians 4:19** "I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will..."
- **Romans 1:10** "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you..."
- **Acts 18:21** "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus..."

- **Plan wisely for your future:**

- **Proverbs 15:22** "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established..."
- **Proverbs 20:18** "Every purpose is established by counsel: and with good advice make war..."
- **Proverbs 24:3-4** "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches..."

- **Take reasonable risks comforted by God's providence:**  
**Ecclesiastes 11:4-6** "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good..."
- **Be flexible and trust God with what is beyond your control:**
  - **James 4:13-15** "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that..."
  - **Proverbs 16:3** "Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established..."
  - **Proverbs 16:9** "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps..."
  - **Proverbs 19:21** "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand..."

**Principle 3: Endeavor to finish each season well: 16:8-9** "But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries..."

- **Paul understood his season of ministry: 16:8-9** "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me..."
  - **His work was unique because he was not a pastor.**
  - **He had the discernment to recognize the season he was in.**
  - **He recognized God's providence in that season.**
  - **He was motivated to fulfill the job God had given him for that season.**
- **He understood ministry tension:**
  - **God's providence:** "A great door and effectual is opened unto me..."
    - **Opportunities to minister are from God.**
    - When spiritual fruit is produced in ministry, it all goes back to God's grace.
  - **Satanic opposition:** "And there are many adversaries..."
- **Paul often experienced this ministry tension: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12** "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to

shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.

- When God is working, expect opposition and tension.
- Expect to feel these tensions simultaneously.
- Don't allow these tensions to turn us off course.
- Let them encourage you to self-reflect.
- Let them cause you to have a greater dependence on the Lord.
- Let them cause you to remember that ministry blessing are all the result of God's grace.

**Principle 4: Look out for your ministry partners: 16:10-12** "Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren. As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time..."

- **He looked out for a young and vulnerable minister: 16:10-11** "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace..."
  - He knew Timothy's temperament.
  - He knew Timothy's inexperience.
  - He knew the temperament of the people.
  - He appealed to them to treat Timothy with respect because he was doing the Lord's work.
- **He was not threatened by a gifted minister: 16:12** "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren..."
  - The Corinthian church wrongly compared Paul and Apollos treating them as rivals.
  - This fleshly view of ministry did not make Paul feel threatened.
  - He wanted Apollos to serve at Corinth, because he was gifted to do the work of ministry.

- **Though an apostle, he did not micromanage his peers: 16:12**  
 “But his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time...”
  - Paul had a desire, but he respected Apollos right to make up his own mind.
  - He was Christ’s servant, not Paul’s servant.
- **Summary:**
  - Paul was a team player who was not doing the work out of rivalry or contention.
  - He simply wanted God’s word to root in hearts and lives to be changed.
  - We need the same attitude when we serve in any type of ministry.

### **Application:**

- **First: Prioritize maintaining spiritual relationships:**
  - Put people’s growth ahead of your personal agendas.
  - Slow down the pace of life and invest in the people around you.
  - Recognize that maintaining these kinds of relationships takes time and effort.
- **Second: Hold your plans humbly:**
  - Plan wisely for your future.
  - Take reasonable risks comforted by God’s providence.
  - Be flexible and trust God with what is beyond your control.
- **Third: Endeavor to finish each season well:**
  - When God is working, expect opposition and tension.
  - Expect to feel these tensions simultaneously.
  - Don’t allow these tensions to turn us off course.
  - Let them encourage you to self-reflect.
  - Let them cause you to have a greater dependence on the Lord.
  - Let them cause you to remember that ministry blessing are all the result of God’s grace.
- **Fourth: Look out for your ministry partners:**
  - Look out for the inexperienced and vulnerable.
  - Don’t feel threatened by gifted people.
  - Don’t try to micromanage your peers.