

Correcting Contentious Christians

1 Corinthians 11:17-19

I. Intro

● Anecdote

• Contend

- Contentious conflicts created by combative Christians are becoming more and more commonplace - in the 21st century church.
- This includes the disciples who disagree about Biblical eschatology - and this also includes those who contend about Cultural Ecclesiology.
- There are disciples who debate about the doctrine of atonement - as well as those who disagree about the doctrine of hell.
- There are believers who argue about the AGE of the Earth - as well as those who disagree about the SHAPE of the earth.
- There are those who contend about the exercise of Charismatic Gifts - and there are those who debate about the doctrine of deliverance.
- To sum it up with simplicity - there is no shortage of spiritual subjects that Christians love to argue about.
- And it's for this reason that we should consider what Paul had to say - about contentious Christians.

II. Outline

● Points

• Contentious

- It was back in the beginning of this epistle - where Paul first addressed the contentious Christians - who were attending the church in Corinth.

- And now - it's here in the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians - where we find Paul - challenging those who were creating conflicts.
- And as we study the scriptures before us this morning - we'll begin to see that...
 1. ...Contentious Christians engage in Defamation
 2. ...Contentious Christians engage in Division
 3. ...Contentious Christians engage in Dissension
- With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Corinthians chapter 11...
 - ...where we find Paul correcting the Contentious Christians in Corinth.

III. Defamation

- Set up

- Context

- Now - as we make our way to the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians - I should take a moment to remind you that...
- ...Paul has already spent a great deal of time - addressing the Contentious Christians who were attending the church there in Corinth
- And while it's true that every Christian has been called to earnestly contend FOR the faith...
- ...it's also true that we've been called to avoid being unnecessarily confrontational with one another.
- The reason why is because - believers have been called to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- And with this as our goal - let's consider the challenge that Paul presented - here in 1st Corinthians chapter 11.
- Look with me - beginning there at verse 17 - where Paul declared...

● Text

1Co 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

1Co 11:18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

1Co 11:19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

• Church

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - sharing his concerns about the reasons for why the Christians in Corinth were gathering together at church.
- That word - church - found there in the middle of verse 18 - was translated from the Greek word - *ekklēsia*...
- ...which was used in reference to the whole body of Christians scattered throughout the earth - otherwise known as the Universal Church.
- In the context of this passage - Paul was using this word - in reference to the local assembly of Christians...
- ...who gather together with the primary goal of corporately worshipping the Lord.
- Sadly - there are times when the fellowship of the local church becomes a toxic environment...
- ...as contentious Christians create a culture of conflict.

• Better

- Sadly - that seems to've been the situation happening there at the church in Corinth.
- Proof of my point can be found there in verse 17 - where Paul declared...
 1Co 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.
- Rather than gathering together - for the benefit of every believer...
 - ...the Christians in Corinth seemed to be showing up to church - for all the wrong reasons.
 - And while it's true that Paul encouraged every believer - to speak the truth in love - so that we can edify one another...
 - ...it's also true that there were those at the church in Corinth - who were creating contentions...
 - ...as they spoke defamatory words - about those with whom they disagreed.
- Conflicts
 - Remember - there were many contentious conflicts - occurring between the Christians in Corinth.
 - There were contentious conflicts created by those who were attempting to hijack the leadership of the church.
 - And there were contentious conflicts concerning how to deal with those who were still engaging in sexual immorality.
 - There were contentious conflicts created by those who were taking other believers - before the secular courts.
 - And there were contentious conflicts occurring between those who disagreed about eating meats offered to idols.

- It's for this reason that Paul rebuked them for the way that they showed up to church - in order to tear each-other down.
- Worse
 - Look with me again - there at verse 17 - where he declared...

1Co 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

- That word - worse - was translated from a Greek word - was used in reference to that which is weakened - or made inferior.
- Rather than showing up to strengthen the Saints - there were Christians at the church in Corinth who were working to weaken others.
- Rather than building up the body of believers - there were those who were tearing it down.
- And it's for this reason that Paul began this epistle - by encouraging them to speak the same things...
 - ...so that they could be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
- Less
 - With this as the goal - I should take a moment to point out that - the Greek word rendered - worse - can also be rendered - less.
 - And in the context of this chapter - it seems to me that Paul was challenging the Christians in Corinth...
 - ...who were treating those they disagreed with - as being "less than" - - or - inferior in the faith.
 - In other words - there were those who were belittling other believers - with descriptive defamations.

- Rather than gathering together - in order to proclaim the praises of our Savior...
- ...they were showing up to church - in order to talk trash about those they disagreed with.

- Asterisk

- It's for this reason that Paul placed an asterisk next to the applause that he presented - back in the beginning of this chapter.
- Let's back up and consider the way that Paul praised them back in verse 2 where he declared...

1Co 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

- Paul began this chapter - by applauding the original recipients - for the things that they were doing right.
 - This included the way that they set out to understand - and apply the teachings that Paul had presented.
 - And while it's true that they were all attempting to keep the traditions that he delivered to them...
 - ...it's also true that they were also engaging in disagreements that devolved into defamatory debates.
 - That being the case - Paul assured them that - their contentious conflicts were NOT worthy of his applause.

- Disagreements

- Now - I should take a moment to point out that - disagreements amongst disciples are inevitable.
- And so - Paul wasn't rebuking them - because they had different ideas about how to apply his teachings.

- No - instead - he was rebuking them - for the way they were belittling one another - with derogatory defamations.
- And in order to better grasp the problem - we should consider the way that James addressed this issue - in his epistle.
- Hold your place here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn to James chapter 3 - - you see - it's here in the third chapter of James...
 - ...where we find James - helping his audience to understand that - the Christians who use their tongues to tear others down...
 - ...are actually hurting our brothers and sisters in Christ - with the words that defame their name.
- Tongue
 - Let's consider how James explained it - here in James chapter 3 - look with me beginning there at verse 3 - where he declared...

Jas 3:3 Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body.

Jas 3:4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

Jas 3:5 Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

Jas 3:6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell.

Jas 3:7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

Jas 3:8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Jas 3:9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

Jas 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

- Here in these verses - we find James - describing the destruction that can be caused by the tongues of contentious Christians.
- And it's sad to say that - there are many who will stand in the congregation - and sing the praises of our Savior...
- ...then turn around - and with the same tongue - defame another disciple - with words that belittle that believer.
- And if this sounds like something you're guilty of - then I encourage you to consider what James said - when he declared...

Jas 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so.

● Application

- Words
- I like the way that Paul put it - in Ephesians chapter 4 - it's beginning at verse 29 - where he declared...

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Eph 4:31 Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

- The contentious Christian who belittles other believers - is simultaneously grieving the Holy Spirit of God.
- It's for this reason that Paul encouraged us to put the corrupt words of evil speech - out of our mouths.

- Instead - we should say those things are good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers.
- And this is especially true - when we find ourselves in the middle of a disagreement - with another believer.
 - In this way - we'll become gracious believers who refrain from defaming those we disagree with.

● Transition

• Points

- Now - this brings us to our second point - because listen....

1. ...Contentious Christians not only engage in Defamation...

2. ...but - Contentious Christians also engage in Division

- With this as our focus - let's make our way back to 1st Corinthians chapter 11...
- ...where we find Paul - addressing those who were causing divisions.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 17 - where Paul declared...

IV. Division

● Text

1Co 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

1Co 11:18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

• Divisions

- That word - divisions - found there in verse 18 - was translated from the Greek word - schísma - which is the basis for our English word - schism.

- This word was used in reference to a split - or a tear that creates a gap.
- In the context of this verse - Paul was referring to a rift that was ripping the church apart.
- And as we consider how doctrinal differences and divided loyalties were creating discord amongst the disciples....
- ...it's crucial for us to realize that the conflicts created by contentious Christians...
 - ...will always cause division within our fellowship of faith.
- Split
- I like the way that William MacDonald explained it - in his commentary of 1st Corinthians - here's how he put it...

This does not mean that parties had broken away from the church and formed separate fellowships, but rather that there were cliques and factions within the congregation. A schism is a party inside, whereas a sect is a different party outside.

- From this - we can see that - the contentious Christians in Corinth were still gathering together in the same fellowship of faith.
- And yet - at the same time - they were creating carnal cliques within their congregation...
 - ...as disagreements created the conditions for division - within their fellowship of faith.
 - And knowing how these divisions eventually result in church splits...
 - ...Paul began this epistle - by encouraging them to end their contentious divisions.
- No Divisions

- This was exactly how he began this epistle - as a matter of fact - it was back in 1st Corinthians chapter 1 - verse 10 - where Paul declared...

1Co 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

- Rather than engaging in contentious conflicts that create the conditions for division...
 - ...Paul encouraged the Christians in Corinth - to become believers who were of one mind - being united in both - thought and purpose.
 - And while it's true that Paul encouraged them to refrain from the discord of divisions...
 - ...it's also true that he was referring to the divisions - and NOT divisions.
 - Just to be clear - it's important for us to understand that - there are times when division is actually in line with God's will.
- Christians
 - For example - it was back in the fifth chapter of this same epistle - where Paul encouraged his audience to divide with backslidden believers.
 - It's 1st Corinthians chapter 5 - beginning at verse 9 - where Paul declared...

1Co 5:9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

1Co 5:10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

1Co 5:11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

1Co 5:12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside?
Do you not judge those who are inside?

1Co 5:13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

- According to Paul - - Christians have been called to separate ourselves from backslidden believers - who have returned to a life of sin.
- This is not only true of those who continue engaging in sexual immorality...
 - ...but - it's also true of those who are covetous - or idolaters - or revilers - or drunkards - or extortioners.
 - And while I realize that this might seem like an unloving response to the sins of a backslidden believer...
 - ...the fact still remains - we've been called to divide ourselves from Christians - who continue living in sin.
- False Teachers
 - Not only them - but - Paul also encouraged us to divide ourselves from false teachers.
 - It's in Romans chapter 16 - beginning at verse 17 - where Paul declared...

Rom 16:17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

Rom 16:18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

- Knowing that there would be false teachers who would infiltrate the church with their false doctrines...
 - ...Paul encouraged the Christians in Rome to note those who cause doctrinal divisions - and then avoid them.

- In other words - we've been called to divide ourselves from those who cause doctrinal divisions.
- And just to be clear - we haven't been called to create the division - no - instead...
 - ...we should divide ourselves from those who are trying to divide the church with false doctrines.

- Reject

- I like the way that Paul put it - in the letter he sent to pastor Titus - it's Titus chapter 3 - beginning at verse 9 - where Paul declared...

Titus 3:9 ...avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.

Titus 3:10 Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition,

Titus 3:11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

- Here in this pastoral epistle - we find Paul - helping pastor Titus to understand we should avoid becoming divisive disciples.
- At the same time - he also encouraged pastor Titus to reject divisive disciples - after the first and second admonition.
- The reason why is because - the disciples who continue causing division in their fellowship of faith...
 - ...has a twisted desire to create contentions in their Christian congregation.
 - And it's sad to say that - there are many divisive disciples - who love to stir up this type of conflict.

- Relational

- There are also times when our faith in the Lord - will end up creating division within our families.

- Let's consider how Christ Jesus put it in Matthew chapter 10 - it's beginning at verse 32 - where He declared...

Mat 10:32 "...whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Mat 10:33 "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Mat 10:34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

Mat 10:35 "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';

Mat 10:36 "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'

- Those who place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - will often times experience division...
 - ...with family members who are rejecting Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
 - And while we should try to solve this separation - by leading them to the Lord Jesus...
 - ...there are times when our profession of faith will create a deeper divide...
 - ...with those family members who don't want to hear about Jesus.

● Application

- Gather
 - In order to further grasp how the sword of our Savior separates believers from unbelievers - we should consider another statement that Jesus made.
 - It's in Matthew chapter 12 - verse 30 - where the Lord declared...

Mat 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

- According to Jesus - every person in the world today - is divided into one of two camps.
- There are those who are actively gathering people to the Lord Jesus - by presenting them with the gospel of grace.
- And then there are those who scatter people abroad - as they lead people away from Jesus - in any number of directions.
- There are those who gather together with the Lord Jesus - within our fellowship of faith...
 - ...and then there are those who have no interest in the Christian community - because - they don't believe in Jesus.
- Discernment
 - With all of this in mind - there should be no doubt that - division is inevitable.
 - And not only is division inevitable - but - there are times when Christians are called to separate ourselves from those who cause division.
 - Whether we're talking about the false teachers who present doctrines of demons - or backslidden believers who are living in sin...
 - ...there are times when we must divide ourselves from those who are causing division.
 - And while it's true that Paul called every Christian to refrain from causing division with other disciples...
 - ...it's also true that we've been called to divide from divisive people.
- Transition
 - Points
 - Now - this brings us to our third and final point - because listen....

1. ...Contentious Christians not only engage in Defamation...
2. ...and - Contentious Christians not only engage in Division...
3. ...but - Contentious Christians also engage in Dissension
 - With this as our focus - let's make our way back to 1st Corinthians chapter 11...
 - ...where we find Paul - addressing those who were creating dissensions.
 - Look with me again - beginning there at verse 17 - where Paul declared...

V. Dissension

● Text

1Co 11:17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

1Co 11:18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

1Co 11:19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

- Factions
 - Now - that word - factions - was translated from the Greek word - hairesis - which is the basis for our English word - heresies.
 - And while the word - heresy - refers to any belief, opinion, or theory that strongly contradicts the established orthodox beliefs...
 - ...the Greek word - hairesis - was used of those who create disunion - by following after their own tenets and teachings.
 - What this means is that - the combative Christians who were creating contentions there at the church in Corinth...

- ...they weren't just causing division with other disciples - - they were attempting to form a faction...
- ...as they presented heretical doctrines which were in conflict with the teachings of Paul.

- Heresies

- It's for this reason that the scholars who created the King James Version rendered verse 19 in this way...

1Co 11:19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

- From this - we can see that the contentious Christians who were causing divisions...
 - ...were actually spreading heretical doctrines - in order to form their factions.
 - And in order to further grasp how divisive disciples use heretical doctrines to create discord and disunity...
 - ...we should take a moment to consider how the Greek word - hairesis...
 - ...was also used of the dissensions that arise from a diversity of opinions and aims

- Dissensions

- That being the case - we could render verse 19 in this way...

1Co 11:19 For there must also be dissensions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.

- Just to be clear - the word - dissensions - in this context - refers to the contentious quarrels that occur...

- ...as divisive disciples create discord and disunity - as they spread heretical doctrines in their church.
- What this means is that - the contentious Christians in Corinth were sowing the seeds of discord - as they presented heretical doctrines.
- And while it's true that these doctrinal dissensions were a real issue back in the first century church...
 - ...it's also true that there are still divisive disciples who spread heretical doctrines - in the 21st century church.
- List
 - Just to be clear - a heresy is a belief or teaching that directly contradicts the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith.
 - These deviations primarily concern the nature of the Trinity, the identity of Jesus - or the plan of salvation.
 - This includes those who teach Modalism - which is based on the belief that the Father - Son - and Holy Spirit are different modes of God.
 - Then there are those who teach Partialism - which is based on the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each 1/3 of God.
 - There are those who teach Pelagianism - by denying the doctrine of original sin - while insisting that sinners can earn salvation.
 - Then there are those who teach Adoptionism - which is based on the belief that Jesus was born human and then became divine.
 - And it's sad to say that there are divisive disciples in the church today who create dissension - as they declare heretical doctrines.
- Heterodoxies

- Not only that - but there are also divisive disciples - who create dissensions with Heterodoxies.
- Just to be clear - a Heterodoxy is a Biblical interpretation or Christian doctrine that differs from the official position of the Universal church.
- This includes annihilationism - which is based on the belief that the people who end up in hell will eventually cease to exist.
- This also includes Theistic Evolution - which is based on the belief that God used the process of evolution to bring about humanity.
- Then there's the gap theory which places a period of time between Genesis 1:1 - and Genesis 1:2
 - And listen - I could spend the rest of our time today - presenting a long list of heresies - and heterodoxies...
 - ...that have been used to create dissension in the church.
- Instructions
 - That being the case - we'll do well to consider the warning that Paul presented - to the pastors at the church in Ephesus.
 - Hold your place - here in 1st Corinthians - and let's turn in our Bibles to in Acts chapter 20...
 - ...and as we make our way to the twentieth chapter of Acts - I should take a moment to point out that...
 - ...Paul was making his way back to Jerusalem - when he stopped of to meet with a group of pastors from the church in Ephesus.
 - And he took this opportunity to provide those pastors with the instructions they needed...
 - ...concerning the divisive disciples who would divide their church with doctrinal dissensions.

- Overseers

- Let's consider how Paul put it - here in Acts chapter 20 - - look with me beginning there at verse 28 - where he declared...

Act 20:28 “...take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Act 20:29 “For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

Act 20:30 “Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Act 20:31 “Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

- According to Paul - there would be wolves in the sheep's clothing - - or false teachers - who would try to infiltrate the church from without.
- At the same time - there would also be those who would rise up from within the church.
- And according to Paul - these disciples would begin to speak perverse things - in order to draw people away after themselves.
- It's for this reason that Paul challenged the pastors in Ephesus to take heed to their flock...
 - ...so that they could protect the people - like a Shepherd protects his sheep.
- Dissension
- Now - as we consider the instructions that Paul presented to the pastors in Ephesus...
- ...we must not fail to notice the difference - between those who were appointed by the Holy Spirit - to oversee the church...

- ...and the divisive disciples - who start speaking perverse things - as they attempt others to join their dissension.
- Simply put - when it comes to the position of pastor - there are those who have been called and empowered - to shepherd the flock...
- ...and then there are those who attempt to usurp the authority of the pastor...
- ...as they use their influence to form a faction that is nothing more than a doctrinal dissension.
 - And with that being the case - we should consider the point that Paul was making - back in 1st Corinthians 11.
- Approved
 - I wanna focus your attention once again - at 1st Corinthians chapter 11 - verse 19 - it's there where Paul declared...

1Co 11:19 For there must also be dissensions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.
 - Now - that word - approved - was translated from a Greek word - which was used of the money-changers...
 - ...who were known to be men of integrity - and the reason why was because...
 - ...they would test the metal of every coin - and then reject the counterfeits.
 - Paul used this same word - in reference to the Christian leaders - whose faith had been put to the test...
 - ...and after passing the test - they were proved to be people of integrity.
- Approval

- I like the way that the scholars who created the Bible in Basic English - they rendered verse 19 - they put it like this...

1Co 11:19 For divisions are necessary among you, in order that those who have God's approval may be clearly seen among you.

- Christian - listen - in every church - there are leaders - who have been approved - and appointed to their position of leadership.
- And then there are those who appoint themselves to a position of leadership - as they attempt to draw away disciples after themselves.
- And it's sad to say that many of these self-appointed leaders will use heresies - and or heterodoxies...
 - ...as they attempt to form a faction that is based on nothing more than a doctrinal dissension.
 - And yet - their dissension is evidence that they haven't been approved by God.
- Contrast
- Let's consider how Paul presented this point - in 2nd Timothy chapter 2 - it's beginning at verse 15 - where he declared...

2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2Ti 2:16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

2Ti 2:17 And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort,

2Ti 2:18 who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.

- Paul not only encouraged pastor Timothy to present himself - a diligent worker - who is approved by God...

- ...but - he also warned pastor Timothy about two men who strayed concerning the truth.
- And according to Paul - they were telling people that the resurrection is already past.
- They were apparently traveling from church to church - overthrowing the faith of many.
- It's for this reason that Paul encouraged Pastor Timothy to show himself as approved - by shunning their profane and idle babblings.
- YouTube
 - Christian - listen - there are many - like Hymenaeus and Philetus - who are overthrowing the faith of many.
 - And you better believe that there are many divisive disciples who find their followers - on platforms like YouTube and TikTok.
 - That's right - there is no shortage of Christian influencers who's doctrinal dissensions are spreading like cancer...
 - ...in the minds of those who don't realize that - they're being led astray - by the profane and idle babblings of social media teachers...
 - ...who have compelling content - and yet - it's nothing more than heresy - and or - heterodoxy.
 - And it's for this reason that I encourage you to submit to the leaders who have been approved by God.

● Application

- Obey
- Let's consider how Paul put it - in Hebrews chapter 13 - it's verse 17 - where he declared...

Heb 13:17 Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

- Christian - listen - there is a reason for why God has approved - and appointed pastors - to shepherd the flock.
- And one reason why is because - the sheep of our good shepherd need the personal oversight.
- And it's the pastor who has been called to watch over the souls of those who have been placed in our flock.
- That being the case - Paul commanded every Christian - to obey those who rule over you...
- ...so that the church might profit from the pastoral ministry - that the Lord has appointed.

VI. Conclusion

● Wrap up

• Points

- Rather than getting caught up in the combative conflicts of contentious Christians - Paul encouraged us to obey those who are approved of God.
- And with this as our goal - it's important for us to remember that...
 1. ...Contentious Christians engage in Defamation...
 - ...as they belittle the believers who disagree with their discord.
 2. ...Contentious Christians also engage in Division...
 - ...as they attempt to divide the church - according to their own desires.
 3. ...And Contentious Christians engage in Dissension...

- ...as they use heresies - and or heterodoxies - to lead people away after themselves.
- And with all of this being the case - we will do well to correct the contentious Christians - who try to lead us astray.
- We should correct them with the truth of God's word - as we pray for them to repent of their carnal contentions.