

## Acts 20:17-38 “The Power of the Spirit to Exhort Leaders” 1.11.15

**Intro.** Do you consider yourself a leader? Leadership is simply influence. Where do you have influence in people’s lives? Would you like to positively influence others for spiritual growth this year? Spouse, family, church, community ...

**Subject: Paul exhorts the Ephesian elders**

**Object: Lead with passion Rom.12:8**

**Context:** Paul prepares leaders from church at Ephesus for their ministry. Paul traveling to Jerusalem

### 1. Be available to serve [17-19]

**17**From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. **18**And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, **19**serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews;

**a. available:** elders travel @ 30 miles (two days) to come to Paul [17] – likely by foot, a sacrifice/hardship. No matter how “able” you are if unavailable won’t help others.

**b. humble:** serve the Lord with humility [19], they saw and were aware of Paul’s example [18]. Served despite hardship and sacrifice [19]

i. **Mark 10:44-45** Jesus’ example; Peter’s example [**1Pet.5:3**]

ii. humility involves thinking less of self & thinking of self less [**Mt.11:28-29** Jesus’ only autobiographical statement (**Phil.2:3-5**)]

iii. how do you feel when treated like a servant – no applause or thanks

**? How do you plan to be available to serve in this coming season?**

### 2. Be Christ-centered [20-24]

**20**how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, **21**testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. **22**And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, **23**except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.**24**But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

**a.** focus on faith in Christ [21]: repent toward God – change thinking about God and sin and faith in Christ: commit to Christ as Lord and Savior

i. kept back nothing helpful [20] Greek *hupostello* = medical term re withholding food  
? what might I be holding back from Karen, sons, those I serve at the church?

**b.** finish your race with joy and the ministry you received from Christ to share the gospel [24] \* family, friends, church, work, school

**George Whitfield:** “There are many who can preach the gospel better than I but none can preach a better gospel”

i. Don't be moved from leading because of the sacrifice or hardship [23-24]

### **3. Be Bible-centered [25-27,32]**

**25**“And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. **26**Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. **27**For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God:

a. the most effective way to teach through the whole counsel of God is expositional Bible teaching is verse by verse, par. by par., chapter by chapter

i. thus don't avoid topics, and ensure proper balance

b. The Bible is the foundation to grow in the faith & build you up [32]

c. Deut. 8:3, Mt.4:4; 2 Tim.3:16-17

### **4. Be shepherds [28-32]**

**28**Therefore 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. **29**For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. **30**Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. **31**Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.**32**“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

a. **take heed to yourself [28]:** need to care for your own spiritual condition to care for others. **Shepherd** implies leading, caring for, protecting, feeding,

b. **protect from wolves [29]:** false teachers [Mt. 7:15]

i. Jesus as Chief Shepherd [1Pet. 5:4], David as a shepherd [1Sam. 17:34-36]

### **5. Be generous/giving [33-35]**

**33** I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. **34**Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. **35**I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”

a. Did not covet their money or apparel [33]. Don't serve for financial gain [1Tim.3:3]

b. **More blessed to give than to receive [35]**

? How have you discovered that it is more blessed to give than to receive?

c. **you must support the weak [35]** command to care for others

### **6. Be prayerful [36-38]**

**36**And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. **37**Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him,**38** sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. **And they accompanied him to the ship.**  
a. Paul prayed with them and presumably for them [36]

## **Discussion Qs**

- 1. Where do you have influence in people's lives? How would you like to positively influence others for spiritual growth?**
- 2. How do you plan to be available to serve in this coming season?**
- 3. How have you discovered that it is more blessed to give than to receive?**
- 4. Spend time praying with others [e.g. your community group, people you serve with, or family] and seeking God's wisdom about leading.**