

A Model for Christian Ministry

(1 Corinthians 16:5-12)

Introduction

➤ The Apostle Paul is regarded as the greatest missionary to ever live. Not only did God use Paul to write two-thirds of the New Testament, but God also used him to be the light that brought the Gospel throughout the entire Gentile world:

Acts 13:47 ~ “For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” (from Is.49:6)

Acts 9:15 ~ “But the Lord said to him [Ananias], ‘Go, for he [Paul] is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.’”

➤ During the second of his four extensive missionary journeys (which is an amazing feat even in today’s standards), Paul planted and ministered to the Christian Church in Corinth (approx. 55 A.D.). Knowing that the Corinthian Christians were struggling with false teaching, corrupted by immorality, and rocked by discord and division, Paul wrote this letter (known to us as 1 Corinthians) with the hope of encouraging and exhorting them to obedient and faithful to the Word of God.

As Paul drew this letter to a close, he gave them some very practical exhortations. to give them some concluding exhortations concerning the life and ministry of a Christian. Specifically, in the passage before us this morning (1Cor.16:5-12), the apostle described his own ministry plans and priorities.

1 Cor 16:5-12 ~ “I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia, ⁶and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. ¹⁰When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. ¹²Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has opportunity.”

➤ Christianity is not a spectator’s sport. The truth is, *every Christian is to be a minister!* In other words, every true believer in Jesus Christ is called to serve Him (to have a ministry) in some capacity. Pastors are not to be hired so that Christians do not have to serve. In fact, biblically, Pastors are to be hired to equip Christians for the work of (church) ministry:

Eph 4:11-13 ~ “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”

2 Cor 5:7 ~ “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” (see 1Cor.3:11-15)

➤ Whether a Christian is involved in a full-time (paid) Christian ministry, or serves as a lay ministry volunteering part-time, every Christian is called by God to serve Him with the gifts and abilities He has provided. Every Christian’s ministry is essentially two-fold: 1) to Evangelize those who are unsaved, 2) to Edify those who are saved (i.e., those in the church).

➤ As Paul described his ministry plans and priorities, 1 Corinthians 16:5-12, he laid out a ministry model for us all to follow – a model that applies to every Christian who seeks to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ. I have outlined this model with four key words.

1. Vision (vs.5)

➤ The first characteristic of an effective and faithful ministry is a vision for the ministry – to work not aimlessly or disingenuously but on purpose and for a purpose. In other words, a minister must have a vision for the future. To say it still another way, every Christian must be prepared and motivated to serve God in future ministry opportunities – never being satisfied with coasting or resting in what has already been accomplished. The only time Christians retire is when they die, and up until that time they are to be eagerly and expectantly awaiting what God would have them do.

➤ Paul made it clear that he had plans to visit Corinth in person: *“I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia”* (vs.5).

✓ Illust: “At the end of a three-year stay in Ephesus, Paul wrote this epistle and probably gave it to Timothy to deliver (16:10). The apostle originally had planned to follow Timothy a short while later (4:19), visiting Corinth both on the way to and from Macedonia (2Cor.1:15-16). But he had to change his plans and decided to visit Corinth later, ‘after I go through Macedonia’. He had to change his plan, but he had a plan to change. Even while he was busy in Ephesus, he was planning the next steps in his ministry – what he would do in Macedonia, Corinth, and then Jerusalem” (John MacArthur; *The*

MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians; 16:5).

In fact, as Paul had already made clear in this letter, he planned on returning to Corinth to help deal with those who were causing havoc in the church.

1 Cor 4:18-19 ~ “Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.”

➤ This was not a random or impulsive decision. An unfortunate common maxim in ministry is, “Attempt things so big that unless God is in it, it’s doomed to fail.” Now while this sounds exciting and visionary, it misplaces the priorities of ministry. It leads many people to jump into a ministry before they have prayerfully sought the wisdom of God (like bungee jumping from a bridge before you check to see if the chord is attached to something). Too often, well-meaning Christians start a ministry – based on a whim or a feeling – and then ask God to bless the mess.

Every Christian has a (or should have a) ministry – something they are committed to do for the glory God with the gifts that He has given them. However, that ministry must first and foremost be a direct response to the calling of God in their life. As Christians, we are servants of God and He is our master. Our job is to do whatever He calls us to do, whenever He calls us to do it, and exactly how He calls us to do it. We do not create the vision, God does. We obediently and faithfully respond to the vision God gives us.

➤ It is also common today to hear ministry leaders declare “without a vision the people will perish” (taken loosely from Prov.29:18). They teach that if you don’t create a vision for your ministry your ministry will not succeed. However, this is a severe abuse of that verse. A correct rendering of the verse reads:

Prov 29:18 ~ “Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.”

Prov 29:18 ~ “Without revelation people run wild, but one who keeps the law will be happy.” (HCSB)

➤ A correct interpretation of this verse helps us to see that any vision (or revelation from God) we have for ministry must first come from God’s Word (*“he who keeps the law”*; vs.5) and not from our own minds. Our job is not to create a vision but to obediently and faithfully serve God according to His Word.

The picture here is not of a group of people trying to be clever or creative in their “vision-casting” (often merely adopting vision statements from secular organizations like Starbucks or Amazon), but of faithful men and women prayerfully studying God’s Word to understand His will for their church ministry.

➤ Paul modeled a man with a vision, yet (as we will see) he had a proper perspective of the future: *“I will visit you after passing through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia”* (vs.5). He did not see himself as “a feather on the breath of God” – lazily or thoughtlessly going through life (foolishly blaming their life’s circumstances on “where the Spirit leads”). For a person who has no idea where he/she is going, is probably not going to get anywhere.

✓ **Illust:** “While he was working as a cobbler in England, William Carey was moved by the great spiritual needs of other parts of the world. He placed a world map in front of his workbench, and, as he worked, he thought, prayed, and wept about what needed to be done and how the Lord could use him to meet those needs. When he finally arrived in India, his first mission assignment, he was ready to begin work. He not only was used directly to make outstanding contributions through teaching, preaching, translation, and printing of Christian literature, but helped prepare the way for every missionary who has served there since. Because he had prayed, planned, and prepared, he was ready when the opportunity came.” (John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*; 16:5).

2. **Submission** (vs.6-7)

➤ A second characteristic of faithful ministry is submission to God and His will. While Paul prepared himself for future ministry opportunities, he understood that God is ultimately in control of his destiny. He wrote: *“and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my journey, wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you now just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.”* (vs.6-7). The word *“perhaps”* (vs.6; *tynchanō*) indicates a goal or target in mind, but with an understanding of the uncertainty of things.

➤ While Paul knew he had to make plans for the future, he also understood that He was not in control of the future. Likewise, we must have a vision for ministry and yet never presume that we know what the future holds. Our plans must always be submissive to the Lord’s will.

1 Cor 4:18-19 ~ “Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills [*thelō*], and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.”

Acts 18:20-21 ~ “When they [the Ephesians] asked him [Paul] to stay for a longer period, he declined. ²¹But on taking leave of them he said, ‘I will return to you if God wills [*thelō*],’ and he set sail from Ephesus.”

Heb 6:3 ~ “And this we will do if God permits [*epitrepō*].”

James 4:13-17 ~ “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’ ¹⁴yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist [*atmis*; like one’s breath on a cold morning or steam off a cup of hot coffee] that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills [*thelō*], we will live and do this or that.’ ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.”

➤ It is the height of ignorance and arrogance to talk as if you know, or are in control of, the future. James, as he so often did, put it bluntly: *“you do not even know what will happen tomorrow”* (Jms.4:14) – which is generous taking into account that we do not know what even will happen today. In comparison to God, the degree of our ignorance is supremely and inconceivably staggering (Is.40:28, 55:8-9; Rom.11:33-36). God knows the future infinitely and perfectly (Ps.139:1-6). We, on the other hand, do

not even know what will happen in the next moment of our lives. We are thoroughly and inescapably ignorant about tomorrow.

James is not proclaiming an all-out prohibition on making plans for the future (as we have seen). But he is admonishing the making of any plans without first consider God and submitting to His will for our lives. When we forget or fail to submit our future (as with our past and present) to God, we effectively act as if we have displaced or dethroned God as Lord of our lives.

- While Paul made plans for the future, he was submissive to God's sovereign plan for his life. We too must never lose sight of the fact that our ministries must be submissive to the Lord's purpose and plan. As we prepare for the future, we must be mindful of Him who holds the future in His hands. Notice again the language Paul used: "*perhaps*" (*tynchanō*; vs.6), "*I hope*" (*elpizō*; vs.7) "*if the Lord permits*" (*kyrios epitrepō*; vs.7).
- All too often, people seek "the will of God" by simply wanting an answer from God. We must not make the grave mistake of seeking God's will without seeking God Himself. God will not be reduced to an "cosmic answer man" or to a "divine Santa Claus" (or "Magic Eight-ball"). We must not seek information from God, without seeking a right relationship with God. We must never presume that God exists to serve us – our needs or desires.

3. Determination (vs.8-9)

- A third characteristic of faithful ministry is determination. Christian ministry is not for the faint of heart; it is not for those who desire acknowledgment and accolades; it is not for those who are looking for an easy task or life. It takes a resolute determination to be faithful in ministry. In fact, the word faithful implies a need for determination. As Paul acknowledged: "*But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*" (vs.8-9).
- Although Paul wanted to come to Corinth, he had to stay committed to the work that was going on in Ephesus. For he had planted the Corinthian church and ministered there for one-and-a-half years (Acts 18:11) before leaving for Ephesus. He knew this letter (1 Corinthians) would create quite a stir among the Christians in Corinth, and he wanted to return there soon.

Paul was not flighty or impulsive, he was not restless or discontented (today, statistically, pastors leave for new churches every 1-5 years). Paul could not leave Ephesus right away, however, "*for a wide door for effective work*" had been opened to him (vs.9). In spite of the fact that "there [were] many who [opposed him]" (vs.9), Paul was not about to leave his post at Ephesus.

✓ Illust: "Ephesus had a great system of organized idolatry, centered in the famous temple of Diana, or Artemis. Ritual prostitution and sexual perversion not only were tolerated but were promoted in the name of religion. In addition, there were certain Jewish exorcists who went around claiming to cast out evil spirits in Jesus' name (Acts 19:13-14). The city was full of occult practitioners of every sort (vs.17-19). Paganism, idolatry, occultism, demonism, superstition, sexual vice, racism, religious animosity – of pagans against Christians, Jews against Christians, and of pagans and Jews against each other – were common and considered normal. Probably no New Testament church had more direct opposition than the one at Ephesus. To Paul great opposition presented great opportunity" (John

MacArthur; *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 1 Corinthians*; 16:9).

- Paul was certainly not engaged in an easy ministry, or even one without enemies: "*But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries*" (vs.8-9). Too many Christians, and pastors, all-too-quickly assume that if the ministry gets difficult than God must be calling them to do something else or to go somewhere else. The equate "*adversities*" (*antikeimai*; opposition or opponents) with God closing a door. Paul saw this in just the opposite way: because of the adversities, he knew he needed to stay.

✓Illust: On too many occasions when I am interviewing prospective pastors, I have heard them say things admit they do not want to pastor where it is “spiritually dark”, or where there is not a good school system, or where the church is too small, or where the salary is not big enough, or if the medical plan is not good enough (I even heard one pastor say he would not pastor in North Bend because he heard it was too foggy!).

➤The reason Paul could not come to Corinth sooner was because the work at Ephesus needed to continue. God had opened a door of ministry in the midst of much opposition (cf. 15:32; 2Cor.2:12-13). In fact, it very well could have been because of the opposition that Paul felt the Holy Spirit’s leading to stay in Ephesus. Paul did not have any false illusions of ministry being painless or easy. Of his experience in Ephesus Paul later wrote:

2 Cor 1:8-10 ~ “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia [the Roman province in which Ephesus was located]. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. ⁹Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”

2 Cor 6:4-5 ~ “but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger”

➤This resolute determination characterized Paul’s attitude toward ministry.

Addressing the elders at Ephesus Paul said:

Acts 20:22-24 ~ “And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”

To the Christians in Colossae Paul wrote:

Col 1:28-29 ~ “[Christ] we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil [*kopiaō*], struggling [*agōnizomai*] with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

➤As Christians, we must be prepared to face opposition in ministry. Satan is not going to stand idly by without attacking ministries that are truthfully and effectively preaching and teaching the Gospel. Opposition does not scare off a strong warrior, for he knows that it is because of the opposition that he is called to fight!

✓Illust: G. Campbell Morgan said, “If you have no opposition in the place you serve, you’re serving in the wrong place.”

✓Illust: A true story from WWII and the battle of Iwo Jima:

“As rainy morning wore into afternoon and the fighting bogged down, the Marines continued to take casualties. Often it was the corpsmen [medics] themselves who died as they tried to preserve life. William Hoopes of Chattanooga was crouching beside a medic named Kelly, who put his head above a protective ridge and placed binoculars to his eyes – just for an instant – to spot a sniper who was peppering his area. In that instant the sniper shot him through the Adam’s apple. Hoopes, a pharmacist’s mate himself, struggled frantically to save his friend. “I took my forceps and reached into his neck to grasp the artery and pinch it off,” Hoopes recalled. “His blood was spurting. He had no speech but his eyes were on me. He knew I was trying to save his life. I tried everything in the world. I couldn’t do it. I tried. The blood was so slippery. I couldn’t get the artery. I was trying so hard. And all the while he just looked at me. He looked directly into my face. The last thing he did

as the blood spurts became less and less was to pat me on the arm as if to say, ‘That’s all right.’ Then he died” (from *Flags of Our Fathers*).

Listen to John Piper’s response to this story: “In this heart-breaking moment I want to be Hoopes and I want to be Kelly. I want to be able to say to suffering and perishing people, ‘I tried everything in the world ... I was trying so hard.’ And I want to be able to say to those around me when I die, ‘It’s all right. To live is Christ and to die is gain”” (from *Don’t Waste Your Life*; p.124-125).

- God forbid we decide to keep this great salvation all to ourselves. Only when we are doing all we can do to tell remember the truths of God, remain in the truth of God, and reach out to those who need to hear the truth of God, then we can rest in God! Until then, we must be passionately resolved to serve the Lord faithfully with everything we have and everything we are.
- Every Christian ministry should exist primarily for the purpose of glorifying God through the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The church does not exist merely for itself. The church exists to worship God and obey His commands – to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to a world that does not know Him (Matt.28:18-20).

1 Cor 15:58 ~ “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”

- Just as no church is without its problems, so too, no ministry is not without its opposition. Therefore, the church needs Christians who will serve as ministers with resolute determination. Leaders who will fight for the truth of the Gospel with resolve and integrity. The Apostle Paul was such a man, and so were Timothy and Apollos.

4. Devotion (vs.10-12)

- A fourth characteristic of an effective and faithful ministry is a devotion to Christ, and to other Christian ministers and ministries. It was not uncommon for Paul to close his letters by exhorting the church to embrace the coming of fellow Christian ministers (see Rom.16). For Paul, it wasn’t simply his ministry that was important but the ministry that was important. He never seemed to become a legend in his own mind. He never desired to build his ministry while tearing down the Christ-centered ministry of someone else.

Again, every Christian is called to be a minister (messenger/servant of the Gospel) and therefore every Christian has a ministry. However, there is a disturbing situation that often happens when Christians, ministers, or ministries come in contact with each other. While a heartfelt devotion to one another should occur (being that both are serving the same God and working for the same purpose) a troublesome rivalry all too often results.

✓ Illust: I’ve read that you can put two crabs in one basket and never have to put a lid on it. The reason is that when one crab tries to get out the other crab (also wanting to get out) will climb up the back of the crab pulling them both back down to the bottom of the basket. Perhaps no truer example of this can be seen in ministry. Too often ministers are more concerned about their ministry than other ministers, and consequently they seek to stand on the back of other ministers in order to prosper their ministry.

- It seems the main reason for such competitive rivalry between Christians and Christian ministries stems from a misunderstanding of what it means to have a successful ministry. Today, many are defining success according to secular, physical, and temporal terms (e.g., bodies, buildings, baptisms, budgets). This trend should be a grave concern for every Christian, and especially every church leader.

The apostle Paul did not define success in these terms. In fact, one would be hard-pressed to find Paul describing his ministry in terms of success at all. For Paul, serving the Lord was not a matter of success but faithfulness! (see Acts 20:17-24).

- Keep in mind, there is a great difference between tearing down another Christian ministry or ministry and calling out a heretic, expose heresy, or identifying those who are divisive (see Rom.16:17; 1Cor.5:9-13; Eph.5:11; 1Tim.5:20; 2Tim.4:10; 2Thess.3:6, 14-15; 2Pet.2; Jd.1).
- Jesus summed this up, according to the Gospel of Mark, when He taught His disciples to be as humble as a little child (9:36-37). Upon hearing this, the Apostle John remembered an earlier incident:

Mark 9:38-40 ~ “John said to him, ‘Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’ ³⁹But Jesus said, ‘Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For the one who is not against us is for us.’”

John 3:25-30 ~ “Now a discussion arose between some of John’s [the Baptist’s] disciples and a Jew over purification. ²⁶And they came to John and said to him, ‘Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness – look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him [i.e., Jesus].’ ²⁷John answered, ‘A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ ²⁹The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease.’”

Phil 1:15-18 ~ “Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.”

- Paul showed his devotion to other Christian ministers, and exhorted the Corinthians to do the same, by highlighting both Timothy and Apollos.

a) Timothy (vs.10-11)

- First, regarding Timothy Paul wrote: *“When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ¹¹So let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers”* (vs.10-11). Timothy, who was converted under Paul’s ministry (1Cor.4:17; 1Tim.1:2, 18; 2Tim.1:2), has served with the Apostle Paul shortly after his first arrival in Corinth (2Cor.1:19; Acts 18:5).

The Corinthian Church knew Timothy and Timothy knew the Corinthian Church. It was likely that Timothy was the one who brought this letter to them. Timothy was the young disciple of Paul, and (knowing the Corinthians as he did) Paul might have been concerned that they may react severely to the letter and take it out on Timothy. Therefore, Paul exhorts them to *“see that you put him at ease among you”* (vs.10; lit. “that he has nothing to fear while he is with you”), *“let no one despise him”* (vs.11; “despise” [exoutheneō] to show contempt), and *“Help him on his way”* (vs.11).

- Since Timothy was a young “minister in training” he very well could have been a little nervous with regard to being a minister. In his letters to Timothy, Paul encourages him to be strong, disciplined, and faithful in ministry:

1 Tim 4:12-13 ~ “Let no one despise [kataphroneō; to look down on] you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

2 Tim 1:7 ~ “for God gave us a spirit not of fear [deilia; timidity] but of power and love and self-control.”

- Being a young, inexperienced minister in Corinth was no easy assignment. Therefore, Paul admonishes the church to treat Timothy with love and respect: *“for he is doing the work of the Lord, as I am. ... that he may return to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers”* (vs.10-11).

b) Apollos (vs.12)

➤ Apollos, on the other hand, was not a young inexperienced minister. In fact, he knew the Corinthian church well for he had ministered to them (Acts 19:1). So well, in fact, Paul had *“strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now”* (vs.12). Paul wanted Apollos to accompany Timothy and Erastus to Corinth, but apparently Apollos had a different plan. No doubt the divisive factionist groups that emerged while Apollos’s ministry in Corinth had something to do with his decision to delay his return (see 1:10-12). But most likely, Apollos simply had a conviction to stay in Ephesus and Paul respected his conviction.

Acts 18:24-28 ~ “Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.”

➤ Paul still embraced Apollos and insured the church that Apollos would return to Corinth *“when he has opportunity”* (vs.12). This not only shows Apollos’ selfless and gracious devotion to the church, but was Paul’s calling the church to be selflessly and graciously devoted to Apollos.

Conclusion

➤ May we learn from, and seek to emulate, Paul’s model of ministry.

Eph 5:15-18 ~ “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Eph 5:15-16 ~ “Therefore be very careful how you live – not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil.” (NET)

Eph 5:15-16 ~ “Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk – not as unwise people but as wise – ¹⁶making the most of the time, because the days are evil.” (HCSB)

➤ Paul is widely regarded as the greatest missionary who has ever lived (and I would certainly not argue against it). Yet, we never read in the Bible where Paul referred to himself as a missionary or was referred to as a missionary [in fact, the word “missionary” does not appear in the Bible]. In addition to being *“an apostle”* (1Cor.1:1; see Rom.1:1; Gal.1:1; Eph.1:1; Col.1:1), Paul often referred to himself as *“a slave [doulos] of Christ Jesus”* (Rom.1:1; see Gal.1:10; Phil.1:1; Tit.1:1). It was this paradigm that compelled the apostle Paul to serve the Lord so fully and so faithfully.

May we will be faithful to the Lord’s will for our lives, and hear Him say: *“... Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master”* (Matt 25:23).