



30 | ACTS 18:1-18

COURAGE AT CORINTH

Don't lose heart in reaching the lost.

Outline

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Call to Worship

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! ² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! —Psalm 95:1-2

Songs

10,000 Reasons

O Lord, My Rock and My Redeemer

Living Hope

Take the Name of Jesus with You

Blessed Be Your Name

Scripture Reading: _____

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can give over Zelle through your bank with no fees (use secretary@livinghopechurch.net). We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center. Malachi 3, "Test me in this" Proverbs: **"Give of your firstfruits."** We believe blessing comes by putting God first.

Introduction

A man was shoveling snow from his driveway when two boys carrying snow shovels approached him.

"Can we shovel your snow, Mister?" one of them asked. "Only two dollars!"

Puzzled, the man replied, "Can't you see that I'm doing it myself?"

"Sure," said the enterprising boy; "that's why we asked. We get most of our business from people who are half through and feel like quitting!"

So many people quit at so many things when they're only halfway through. As Christians, we need to have courage and perseverance. Charles Spurgeon reminded his London congregation, **"By perseverance, the snail reached the ark."**¹

What do you do when you are completely discouraged in life? What if you've got a spiritual brick wall right in front of you? Paul had that in Corinth, and the Lord gave him four ways of gaining spiritual courage in the midst of encouragement.

Corinth, with its 200,000 people, would not be the easiest city in which to start a church, and yet that's where Paul went after leaving Athens. And he went alone! The going was tough, but the apostle did not give up. Corinth's reputation for wickedness was known all over the Roman Empire. Romans 1:18–32 which refers to how to reach a pagan culture was written in Corinth! Thanks to its location, the city was a center for both trade and travel. Money and vice, along with strange philosophies and new religions, came to Corinth and found a home there. Corinth was the capital of Achaia and one of the two most important cities of that time that Paul visited. The other was Ephesus.²

In the eighteenth chapter of Acts, we find Paul working for a year and a half in Corinth. Corinth was not like Athens. It was actually far more influential than the city of Athens at the time. Yet it was incredibly receptive to the gospel, and Paul spent the first long period of his missionary career in this city. Later he would spend a similarly long time in Ephesus.³

With the rampant paganism of Corinth, it would be so easy to give up. Dear saints, it is the same where you live. Don't lose heart. What do we need to stay strong for the Lord and reach this pagan culture?

Key Thought: God has provided everything you need to reach this pagan culture. Instead of losing heart, we need to look up at our mighty Savior!

¹ Charles Spurgeon. "The Parable of the Ark" *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1907), 265.

² Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 474.

³ James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 302.

So how do we reach our pagan culture? We can learn a lot from the apostle Paul's ministry in Corinth. Four things we find from this passage that stem the tide of discouragement, all flowing from the gospel: gospel friendships, gospel fruit, gospel fellowship, and gospel fire.

1. GOSPEL FRIENDSHIPS (18:1-5A)

Paul thought he was alone in Corinth, but God sent him the fellowship and companionship of friends. He had never met these friends before, but it was like he had known them forever.

THE PROBLEM OF FRIENDLESSNESS

Yet when Paul left Athens and arrived in Corinth, he arrives alone.

Acts 18:1 | After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

How hard is it to live the Christian life without support? It's actually impossible. We are made to be the body of Christ, not just the "eyeball" or the "finger" of Christ. We need each other. We are interconnected. The sure path to failure in the Christian life and Christian ministry is to be a loner.

What about you? Do you **make an excuse** because you are an introvert **that it's ok for you to live the Christian life alone**? Maybe you blame the body of Christ for not being "friendly." That's one of the most common excuses. Yet the Scripture tells us that if we want friends, we have to be friendly.

Proverbs 18:24, KJV | A man that has friends must show himself friendly.

1 John 5:1 | Everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

1 Corinthians 12:21-22 | The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable

We can't say to anyone in the body of Christ, "I have no need of you." A vital part of growing up into Christ (Eph 4:16) is being a friend to all those in the body of Christ. Be friendly! Reach out! There are no lone ranger Christians who are healthy.

THE PRIVILEGE OF FRIENDSHIP

If you are a loner, you are not growing. Paul sought out gospel friends in Corinth. He understood the privilege of friendship. He sought out friends, and God blessed his efforts and gave him a couple who became two of Paul's best friends.

Acts 18:2 | And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them.

The emperor **Claudius had banished all Jews from the city of Rome**, and that included Aquila and his wife Priscilla. This edict, called the "*impulsore Chresto*" was

associated with the Jews rioting against the preaching of Christ in Rome.⁴ The edict is probably to be dated in AD 49–50, and Paul dedicates to Romans 9–11 in his epistle to settle some of the dissention that occurred in the churches as a result of this edict.

THE PLACES OF FRIENDSHIP

Paul made friends at work and at worship where he preached the gospel. Work is a wonderful place for evangelism

Friends at Work

Acts 18:3 | And because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade.

Paul was a tentmaker, so this is where he met Aquila and Priscilla. Tents were made out of leather, so that **the term tentmaker also means “leatherworker”** and implies all kinds of leather goods. Allusions to this occupation of Paul’s show up in several New Testament texts (Acts 20:34; 1 Cor 9:1–18; 2 Cor 11:7–12; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–10).⁵ Paul worked with tents and all kinds of leather goods. This was a good place to preach the gospel. Isn’t it amazing after all that Paul had seen and done, that he was willing to go to work every day to support himself? One of the early church fathers, **John Chrysostom** (344–407 A.D.) marveled at this fact.

John Chrysostom (344–407 A.D.) | Paul, after countless journeys, despite such great wonders, stayed with a tentmaker and sewed skins. Angels honored him and demons trembled at him, and still he was not ashamed to say, “These same hands served my needs and those who were with me.”⁶

Paul knew that work was a place to give the gospel. Now we don’t get to cheat the company in order to preach the gospel. We are at **work to work, where we should give our employer one hundred percent**. But after work we should be making those gospel connections. Who will tell your co-workers the gospel? **Who will go for the Lord? Who will preach his word? Who will tell your co-workers that Jesus Christ is Lord?** Paul felt a great burden for the lost. Listen to him.

1 Corinthians 9:6, KJV | Necessity is laid upon me. Yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel!

Dear saints, you don’t just work to work. **Work is a place to glorify God**. Work hard. Let your light shine. Make key gospel relationships. We walk in the steps of Jesus who came to heal the brokenhearted, to bind up their wounds. So many need the touch of Jesus to come into their lives through you. Christ died for the sinners you work with. Be careful about getting jaded about your co-workers. Most are lost and under the power of Satan. They will often persecute you but do good to them. Bless those who hate you and at times abuse you. Love them. Let them know that the answer to their great emptiness and misery is Jesus.

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 5, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 310.

⁵ William H. Baker, “Acts,” in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 912.

⁶ John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Book of Acts*, sermon 39 in Philip Schaff et al., eds. *A Select Library of the Nicene and PostNicene Fathers of the Christian Church*. 2 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 1 11:241.

Let me mention one more thing for our men. Notice **Paul is a hard worker, being both an evangelist church planter**, and a tentmaker during the day. When Paul was done with work, he went to work at evangelism. So it is with you men. **When you are done with work, you go back to your other ministry at home.** You work with your wife and care for your children. Help with the home. Help with the kids. Shepherd your wife. When you get home from work, you need to go to minister and work at home.

For **you single men and ladies, you need to be working more in the ministry.** Get involved in helping the elders and deacons in their ministry tasks. Make yourself available to them. Determine to be the most faithful member of the church. Work is a dignified calling. When you are done with your daily work, don't be lazy at home. Get to work!

Friends at Worship

Paul also found the synagogue a great place to evangelize.

Acts 18:4 | And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

Corinth was an important commercial center, so there was undoubtedly a large Jewish synagogue in the city. Paul entered into a dialogue with those who attended the synagogue, as was his usual custom. He was a tireless ambassador for Christ. No opportunity was wasted. **Sabbath after Sabbath he held forth**, making a deep impression on many.⁷

There was Paul evangelizing at a place of worship. **There are many within the walls of our church who have not yet been converted.** The church house is a wonderful place to bring people to faith in Christ.

THE PROVIDENCE OF FRIENDSHIP

Praise God for friendship! We cannot do it alone. We must always be connected to fellow Christians. We will shrivel up and be diseased spiritually if we do not have believers to mend our wounds and keep our eyes on Jesus.

Acts 18:5 | When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word.

The arrival of Paul's colleagues did a number of things for him. Their good report relieved him of the anxiety he felt for the churches they were ministering to. **They might have brought with them the gift of money he received at this time from his friends at Philippi** (2 Cor 11:8; Phil 4:14-20) which enabled him to **give up his secular employment** and devote himself full time to his missionary work. Moreover, the presence of Silas and Timothy gave him much-needed moral support.⁸

Can you imagine Lydia, the jailer, and many others taking a love offering for Paul? They likely sent it through Silas and Timothy who had stayed behind in Berea after Paul was forced to leave the city (17:14). **Had they not stayed behind, who knows if Paul would have received this offering.**

⁷ John Phillips, *Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ac 18:4-5.

⁸ Philips, *ibid*.

Friendship is providential. The people God gives you are from the Lord. Choose your friends wisely. Godly friends will bring you closer to Christ. Ungodly friends will turn you away from the Lord. **Be that godly friend that those around you need!**

Everyone agrees that Paul was a great Christian and a great missionary evangelist, but how much would Paul have accomplished *alone*? Friends like Aquila and Priscilla, Silas and Timothy, and the generous believers in Macedonia, made it possible for Paul to serve the Lord effectively. His Christian friends, new and old, encouraged him at a time when he needed it the most.⁹

Listen, you might be discouraged in your Christian life. Don't give up! You have friends all around you that love you and love Jesus. You can do exactly what God wants you to do if you will stop trying to live the Christian life by yourself. Lean on your friends in Christ.

2. GOSPEL FRUIT (18:5B-8)

Not only are friends encouraging, but God wants to bring people to Christ through you. Paul was struggling in Corinth with loneliness, but that did not stop God from working through him to bring converts into the kingdom.

THE INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION

Silas and Timothy arrived from the **churches of Macedonia— Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea**. Paul was doing what he always did; he was holding forth the word of God.

Acts 18:5 | When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

God's word converts the soul. The great means of the conversion of sinners is the word of God. We are born again, brought to life by grace through faith in Christ. Theologians call this miracle of God that changes the heart and nature "regeneration." We see the place of the word of God in Psalm 19.

Psalm 19:7, KJV | The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul.

The book of Ephesians tells us more specifically how this takes place. Regeneration takes place when, as we are hearing the word of God, he opens our eyes and raises us from the dead. We come to him by grace through believing. The word must do the work.

Ephesians 2:4-6, 8 | But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even **when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus... ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

We know how Paul preached the churches of Macedonia, and he carried that preaching to Corinth. He said to the Macedonians in Thessalonica that it was God's word that did the converting.

⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 475.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 | Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

It wasn't just a lesson Paul was teaching, but it was the Holy Spirit teaching and converting sinners through him. Through the word of God, the Spirit brought conviction and power and conversion.

THE ENEMIES OF CONVERSION

And what is the result in Corinth? It was very fruitful (18:8, "many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed"), but sadly, Paul faced fierce enemies at the synagogue. **When you sincerely proclaim the gospel, you need to not be surprised at satanic attack.** Look what happens when Jesus is lifted up.

Acts 18:6-7 | And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."⁷ And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue.

A major contingent of Jews in the synagogue reviled and rejected Paul's message of Jesus and the resurrection. Paul had to leave and go back to the house by the synagogue with his friend Titius. But before he did, he gave them a warning. **What Paul did was reminiscent of the Old Testament prophets.** Back then, the prophets communicated not only verbally but with behaviors that dramatized the message of God's judgment. **Ezekiel** ate a scroll. **Isaiah** wore only his undergarment for three years. **Hosea** married a prostitute.

When the Jews of the Corinthian synagogue rejected the gospel, they brought God's judgment upon themselves. Paul wanted to make sure they understood they were bringing destruction on themselves. So he **took off his garment and shook it** to indicate that he was shaking the filth of the blasphemers off his body. Paul's conscience was clear, he had proclaimed the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection to them, and they had rejected it. From now on, Paul said, **he would give the gospel exclusively to the Gentiles there in Corinth.**

Dear friend, you will be rejected, but don't weep for yourself, weep for those who are rejecting Christ. Your hands are clean, but his blood is upon their heads. Charles Spurgeon said it well:

If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies. And if they perish, let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go unwarned and unprayed for.¹⁰

With Paul, we need to have a deep compassion for the lost, but after much warning, we must entrust them to the Lord, let their rejection be upon their own accounts. We can continue to pray for them, but we must move on to those the Lord is drawing. This attitude of God's sovereignty in salvation is absolutely vital. We must move on and invest

¹⁰ Charles Spurgeon. "The Wailing of Risca" *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore and Alabaster, 1861), 385.

in those God is saving or we will be in danger of becoming manipulative to the unresponsive.

THE FRUIT OF CONVERSION

Despite the enemy, **God was working mightily in the Corinthian synagogue.** In fact, a **very important person** came to know the Lord.

Acts 18:8 | **Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue**, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.

Even though so many Jews were hostile to Paul, the very leader of the synagogue put his faith in Christ as well as his entire household. Crispus, a Jew, and many other Corinthians believed, both **Jews and Gentiles, and a true church was planted in Corinth.**

3. GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP (18:9-11)

Paul had substantial reasons to be encouraged: Priscilla and Aquila, Silas and Timothy, financial help, a full-time ministry, and encouraging results. Yet he also faced fierce opposition. In the midst of all this, he fell prey to fear and discouragement. We know this is so because God gave him a vision to encourage him.¹¹

THE PROMISES OF FELLOWSHIP

Paul received a vision from the Lord in the night. He was getting weary, and he needed encouragement from the Lord.

Acts 18:9a | And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision.

Paul endured excruciating spiritual warfare, not to mention the many beatings he was getting for preaching the gospel. He was losing his ability to rebound. Like Elijah, he had unbelievable victories, but was now suddenly reeling. Not to mention, there were incredible demonic strongholds in moral pollution of Corinth. Depression was starting to settle in, but the Lord Jesus gave his dear apostle a vision of encouragement.

In fellowship given a five-fold promise: God's peace, God's proclamation, God's presence, God's protection, and God's people.

A Promise of His Peace

Acts 18:9b | Do not be afraid.

Paul is called to not be afraid. Weariness can often make us fear what we shouldn't. In fellowship we are called to God's peace. If you are without peace, you've got to fellowship with God. He calls you to leave the noise of anger and anxiety. He says, "Come to me, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). If you desire heavenly peace in the midst of chaos, seek the Lord. Rest in him.

¹¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 239.

A Promise of Proclamation

Acts 18:9c | But go on speaking and do not be silent.

When we are weary, we can often be quiet, keep to our self, and live in isolation. When we are tired, we live like lone ranger Christians. We make bad choices. And Satan shames us into a life of loneliness and fruitlessness. Lift up your voice. Be like Peter, who after he had fallen, preached Pentecost. Find restoration in Christ. When you find renewal, you will most certainly find your voice to proclaim Christ.

A Promise of His Presence

Acts 18:10a | For I am with you.

One of the major losses we experience with weariness is we feel alienated and distant from God. In actuality, we as believers are united to Christ. He could not be closer. We are literally “one spirit” with Christ. **“He who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him”** (Jn 8:44). We are the very temple of the living God since the Holy Spirit dwells in us (1 Cor 6:19). We have a new heart (Eze 36:26-27). Christ said that we are one with him as he is one with his Father (Jn 17:20-23). Yet despite the reality of our union with Christ, we often feel blind and cold and far away from God. As you rest in Christ, you will know the joy of his presence once again. That’s where real joy comes from. “In your presence is fullness of joy, and at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore” (Psa 16:11).

A Promise of His Protection

Acts 18:10b | And no one will attack you to harm you.

Whatever circumstance you are in that is harassing you and daring you to give up is not real or eternal. No one can touch you without God’s permission. God has given you his greatest gift: the sacrifice of his Son and the indwelling presence of his Spirit. Anything bad that happens will work out for your good (Rom 8:28). Indeed, Solomon reminds us that “God makes all things beautiful in his time” (Eccl 3:11).

A Promise of His People

Acts 18:10c | For I have many in this city who are my people.

Architecturally, Corinth was a marvel, even compared to Athens. In Paul’s day Corinth was a new city. No major building was more than 100 years old.¹² But morally, Corinth was the Sodom and Gomorrah of the ancient world. Yet God had a people for Paul to reach in this city. **“Don’t let your circumstances discourage you”** because there are so many lost souls that **“God wants you to reach”** through you.

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF FELLOWSHIP

Paul refused to listen to his flesh. He listened to the Lord and obeyed him. As a result, he stays at Corinth a year and a half—only in Ephesus, does he stay longer: three years. He bears much fruit through the teaching ministry of the word.

¹² John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 381.

Acts 18:11 | And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

God's got so much fruit for you to bear so don't let the noisiness of discouragement and depression rob you of gospel fruitfulness. The more you fellowship with God, the more your heart and eyes are full of his glorious presence, setting you free to live above the circumstances of this life, and bear much fruit for the kingdom.

4. GOSPEL FIRE (18:12-17)

Finally, though all hell come against us, the worst our enemy can do is make us uncomfortable on this earth. He cannot keep us from fruitfulness, for Jesus said that the building of his church is unstoppable. Let us keep the fire of joy and perseverance hot deep within us by the Spirit. **Christ's promise is unstoppable.**

Matthew 16:18 | I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

We wrestle not against flesh and blood. Our enemy is in the spiritual realm of darkness (Eph 6:12). Our enemy can try to discourage us, but he cannot stop us.

THE ENEMY'S ATTACK CAN'T STOP US

Paul goes before the proconsul, Gallio. A proconsul had many hats, he had authority over the military, but he also acted as a judge. The Jews coordinate and bring a charge against Paul.

Acts 18:12 | But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal.

Paul was brought before the tribunal or judgment seat. It would have been a large, raised stone platform that stood in the marketplace in front of the residence of the proconsul and served as the public court where he tried cases.

THE ENEMY'S STRATEGY CAN'T STOP US

The Jews hoped for a favorable verdict from Gallio, which could then be cited as a precedent in other places where the gospel was preached.¹³ They've got Paul right where they want him. **They'll get the Roman authority to convict him, and then Christianity will be outlawed!** This plan surely came directly from the devil himself. Look how it went down.

Acts 18:13-16 | Saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law."¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint."¹⁵ But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 152.

refuse to be a judge of these things.”¹⁶ And he drove them from the tribunal.

God overruled the Jews through the governing power. God has complete control over our government. We may lose freedoms, we may be brought low as a nation, but the gospel cannot be stopped or hindered from going forth.

THE ENEMY IS POWERLESS TO STOP US

I want you to see who the enemy goes after—the up-and-coming pastor of the Corinthian church, Sosthenes, who was the ruler of the synagogue. No matter: a beating never stopped the gospel from going forth.

Acts 18:17 | And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal, but Gallio paid no attention to any of this.

The Roman ruler “paid no attention” but God did! Even though **Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was beaten**, he went forward and became the **pastor of the church at Corinth**. We don’t have to be discouraged but encouraged with the fire of the Spirit that God will do his work. Look at Paul’s opening greeting from his letter to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 1:1-2 | Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus.

Gallio, as part of the Roman government there in Corinth, actually protected Paul. Not only was he vindicated, but the case set a new benchmark which the Christians could hardly have dared to hope for. In Achaia at least (central and southern Greece). **Christianity is declared legal with the same status as the Jews!**¹⁴ We have no worry in preaching the gospel anywhere because it is God who puts all rulers in their place, and they have no power except through him. What Satan means for evil, God uses for good (Gen 50:20).

Sure, Sosthenes is beaten, but it doesn’t discourage him from teaching and preaching. He goes on and leads the Corinthian believers. Christ will build his church. If we try to build in any other way, but through the power of God, then we labor in vain!

Conclusion

It can be very discouraging in this cold, dark world. Don’t be discouraged. Be looking for those gospel friends, that fellowship, that gospel fruit and that fire from the Holy Spirit. Stay close to Jesus, or your heart will get so cold and discouraged.

I can remember as a kid growing up on the south side of Chicago, **there was this monster hill by our house**. At the first good snow we all grabbed our sleds and made a b-line to divide and conquer, or at least **go sledding**. And if you didn’t have a sled or didn’t know where you put it last winter, you could always grab your cowboy boots. You could always rely on those cowboy boots to have slick enough bottoms to carry you down that slope at a neck-braking speed. Thankfully, as long as I can remember no necks were actually broken.

¹⁴ Tom Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 2: Chapters 13-28* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2008), 103.

As much fun as sledding till we dropped was, it is true that there would come a time when we would drop. Two, three, sometimes four hours into it we would lose feeling in our toes. Our faces would finally be numb. Too much snow would get into the snowsuit. We became walking snowmen. It was time to go home.

The moment we stepped into the door, the warmth of that furnace cranked to, what 67 degrees—began to kick in. Immediately you could begin to feel your face again. You began to thaw out.

Perhaps you are discouraged. The cold world is giving you spiritual frostbite. Don't let the devil and the world freeze your heart. Get close to the fire of the Spirit. He's in you. Let him light you on fire with the persevering mindset that the gospel and the love of God are absolutely unstoppable.