

INTRODUCTION

1. We come now to the word of God
2. Please take your Bible and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 16
3. As we near the end of our study of this letter Paul gives 5 imperatives in verses 13-14
4. They are short and concise
5. Where the first 14 chapters dealt primarily with errors in behavior
6. The 15th chapter addressed their errors in theology
7. Now in these two verses he summarizes everything he has said into these 5 statements
8. He says, "(13) Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. (14) Let all that you do be done in love."
9. These 5 statements are commands for righteous living
10. First he says...

LESSON

I. Be Alert (v.13a)

1. This is one word in the Greek (gregoreo)
2. It means "to watch," "be awake," "be vigilant"

3. It's also used figuratively in 1 Thessalonians 5:10 where "awake or asleep" refers to "being alive"
4. It occurs 22 times in the NT often referring to being spiritually awake and alert as opposed to being spiritually indifferent
5. The Corinthians were morally and spiritually indifferent
6. They were not alert
7. They had allowed their previous life to come back into their lives
8. It was destroying their faithfulness to the Lord
9. It was also destroying their fellowship with each other
10. If you look back through 1 Corinthians you are reminded of their problems:
 1. They substituted human wisdom for God's Word (1:18-2:16)
 2. They were divisive (1:10-17; 3:9)
 3. They were immoral (5:1-13)
 4. They were argumentative (6:1-8)
 5. They were confused about marriage, divorce and celibacy (7:1-40)
 6. They were self-indulgent (10:1-13)
 7. They were indifferent to the welfare of others (10:23-33)
 8. They misunderstood and misused their spiritual gifts (12-14)
 9. Above all they were unloving (13)
 10. They exemplified everything love is not (13)
11. In the NT there are 5 things to be on the alert for:
 1. We are to be alert against Satan

1. 1 Peter 5:8-9, "(8) Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."
2. Satan operates in our lives under "the lusts of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life" (1 John 2:16)

2. We are to be alert for temptation

1. Jesus said in Mark 14:38, "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."
2. James said in James 1:13-16, "(13) Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (15) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

3. We are to be alert for indifference

Jesus said to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3:1-3, (1) "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. (2) 'Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God. (3) 'So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you."

4. We are to be alert for false teachers

1. Peter warned against false teachers in 2 Peter 2:1, "But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves."
2. Paul warned Timothy of what would happen when the Word was not faithfully obeyed and preached in 2 Timothy 4:3-5, "(3) For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, (4) and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (5) But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."
5. We are to be alert for the Lord's return
 1. The two great motives we have for living faithfully for Christ are remembering what He did for us on the cross and looking forward to His coming again
 2. Jesus said in Matthew 24:42, "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."
 3. Peter said in 2 Peter 3:10-12, "(10) But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. (11) Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, (12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!"

Paul gives a second command...

II. Be Firm (v.13b)

John Gill said, "Stand firm in the faith; which is proper to those that are watchful; for men asleep can't well stand.

Gill, John. [An Exposition of the New Testament](#). Vol. 2. London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809. Print. The Baptist Commentary Series.

1. Our standing is to be firm

1. The Greek word Paul uses here for "stand firm" is *steko*
2. This is a present active imperative verb
3. It's used in two ways:
4. To be in a standing position, stand (Mk.11:25)
5. To be firmly committed in conviction or belief (Arndt, William et al. [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) 2000 : 944. Print.)

2. Our standing is to be "firm in the faith"

1. "in the faith" is referring to the content of the gospel not the faith of trusting
2. It takes us back to 15:1 of "the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand"
3. This is "the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints " (Jude 1:3)
4. This is the faith in which we are to "fight the good fight" (1 Tim.6:12)
5. Paul told the Philippians in Philippians 1:27 that he expected to hear they were "standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

6. This is a reference to doctrine
7. The Corinthians were not standing firm in their view of doctrine
8. They had adopted the human philosophy and wisdom of men rather than the Word of God
9. They also were not standing firm in their view of Christ
10. In 12:3 they were claiming to speak by the Spirit of God while at the same time calling Jesus "accursed"
11. This was an attack on the Gospel at its heart
12. They were acting like the false teachers Peter mentions in 2 Peter 2:1 who were "denying the Master who bought them."
13. They needed to "stand firm and hold the traditions" like the Thessalonians were taught (2 Thess.2:15)
14. They needed to resist Satan "firm in your faith" (1 Pet.5:9)
15. They needed to pray as Epaphras prayed for the Colossians that they "may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col.4:12)

If we are to be firm in the faith, we must be well taught in the Word, looking at everything and judging everything by God's truth and standards.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

Albert Barnes says we are to, "Be firm in holding and defending the truths of the gospel. Do not yield to any foe, but maintain the truth, and adhere to your confidence in God and to the doctrines of the gospel with unwavering constancy; see Note, chap. 15:1. Be firm in maintaining what you believe to be true, and in holding on to your

personal confidence in God, notwithstanding all the arts, insinuations, and teachings of seducers and the friends of false doctrine."

Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.

The Corinthians were to be alert, stand firm in the faith, and "act like men"

In other words they needed to...

III. Be Mature (v.13c)

1. This is the Greek word *andrizo*
2. It's used here as a present middle imperative
3. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament
4. In the LXX. it occurs in Josh. 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 1 Chron. 28:20; 2 Chron. 32:7; Nah. 2:1; and in eighteen other places. (Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)
5. It refers to being "like men of wisdom and understanding" and "of mature courage"
6. It has a "strong connotation of bravery and unflinching courage." (Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)
7. We have a similar phrase in common use: "Be a man," or "Show yourself a man;" that is, be not mean, or be not cowardly. (Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)
8. It also speaks of maturity

9. "We are no longer be children" (Eph.4:14) but "grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ" (Eph.4:15)
10. The Corinthians needed to grow up
11. They were not to be "like children" who are "non-proficient, unstable, and weak"
12. Paul told them in 13:11, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."
13. In 14:20 he told them "not [to] be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature."
14. They were to "act the part of men; believe not every spirit; be not carried and tossed about with every wind of doctrine; search the Scriptures, and try every doctrine by them; and having found what is truth abide by it, and be proficient in it, instructing and establishing yourselves and others." (Gill, John. [*An Exposition of the New Testament*](#). Vol. 2. London: Mathews and Leigh, 1809. Print. The Baptist Commentary Series.)

Be alert, firm, mature. The next imperative Paul gives is at the end of verse 13.

They needed to...

IV. Be Strong (v.13d)

1. Or literally "be strengthened"
2. This is passive
3. The word "strong" (krataioo) is used frequently in the NT for inner, spiritual growth
4. We cannot strengthen ourselves. That is the Lord's work.
5. Our part is to submit to Him in order that He may strengthen us

6. We can only "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" (Eph.6:10) and "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim.2:1)
7. That's the only way we can battle and overcome the flesh
8. Romans 8:13 tells us that it is only "by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body"
9. So our spiritual strength to battle and overcome the flesh comes from self-sacrifice, self-denial, and self-discipline
10. Christ is the supreme source of our spiritual strength
11. Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."
12. The Corinthians needed to understand this too
13. They needed look to Christ for their spiritual strength
14. They needed to trust in His power
15. They needed to depend on His grace, which is always sufficient
16. They needed to take heart, be of good courage, and fear the Lord and no man

The last imperative is in verse 14.

They needed to...

V. Be Loving (v.14)

Paul ends with saying, "Let all that you do be done in love."

1. This is the underlying motive for the previous 4 imperatives
2. Love compliments and balances everything else
3. It is the beautiful, softening principle. It keeps our firmness from becoming hardness and our strength from becoming

domineering. It keeps our maturity gentle and considerate. It keeps our right doctrine from becoming obstinate dogmatism and our right living from becoming smug self-righteousness. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

4. This is what the Corinthians needed the most
5. It's also what all believers need
6. Peter said in 1 Peter 4:8, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."
7. Love, like spiritual strength, comes from the Lord
8. 1 John 4:7 says, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."
9. We are only able to love like this "because He first loved us" (v.19)
10. The Corinthians were loveless

John Chrysostom, who was the Bishop of Constantinople, who lived from 386-407 said of the Corinthians: If love had been present, the Corinthians would not have been puffed up, they would not have divided into factions, they would not have gone to law before heathens, or indeed at all. If there had been love in the church, that notorious person would not have taken his father's wife, they would not have looked down on their weaker brethren, and they would not have boasted about their spiritual gifts. Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 44.2.

Bray, Gerald Lewis, ed. [1-2 Corinthians](#). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. Print. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture.

CONCLUSION

1. The Corinthians needed to be alert, firm, mature, strong, and loving
2. The same is true for you and me
3. We can only obey these commands as we're controlled by the Holy Spirit
4. And that calls for each one of us to yield ourselves to Him
5. Are you yielding to the Spirit?
6. In the words of Galatians 5:16, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh."
7. Or the words of Ephesians 5:18, "(18) And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."
8. Or Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."
9. As believers we are called to be holy as He is holy (1 Pet.1:15-16)
10. If you're not living a holy life then you may not even be a Christian
11. Examine your heart right now as we pray
12. Let's pray