

“ARE YOU MAN ENOUGH?”

1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Notes

Whether it is hitting a home run, making the game winning throw, setting a world record in strength, or being the fastest man in the world; it may be having the six pack abs, it may be regaining a former glory; it may be reaching the heights of business, or any number of things.

When we see these types of things, we think to ourselves, “Wow, now that’s real man.”

There is an admirable quality in these types of men isn’t there? But what it is? Is it really their speed, strength, or ruthlessness?

I don’t think it is. I think the thing we admire most about men like this is that they have made their life about one thing and have set to achieving that one thing.

Most of us cannot say that. Most men in our culture today have no purpose, no goals, and no aspirations. They never try to actually order their lives to obtain or achieve their goals.

And many of the goals we set for ourselves, we want to be, or try to be, is the man the world says we should be.

We go after the attributes of the worldly man, the man who is seen as a man in the eyes of other men.

We set our standards of manhood based on what we can do, accomplish or acquire.

Part of the reason that the church and subsequently the world is in such poor shape is because men, Christian men, have quit striving to be men of God, and have settled to be an average man of the world; a man that fits in; a man that gets along.

I want to challenge that view today. I want to show us what a godly man should look like.

The reason I want to show you what a godly man looks like is because a godly man is a man with stamina and lasting effects.

While the man of the world and all his accomplishments will be heralded as a great success and will have obtained much achievement, most of what he was and had will be forgotten and spent not long after his death.

But the godly man, the man who seeks to build Christ in himself and others, the man who is a servant of Jesus, the man who loves God and others-that man will leave a legacy for his family, friends, and those he pours his life into. That man will not only be a blessing while he is alive, but long after his death.

He will not only have God’s blessings on earth, but he will build for himself many treasures in heaven.

As we look at Paul’s words to the Corinthian church today, we will notice 5 traits that Paul instructs the men of the church in:

1. Be alert

2. Stand firm
3. Act like a man
4. Be strong
5. Love

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF A REAL MAN

As Paul was getting news from the Corinthian church, he undoubtedly learned that many of the men in the church were acting immature and not living up to their duties.

As he is closing out his letter in 1 Corinthians Chapter 16, he is giving instructions on his travel and also greetings to specific people.

In the middle of that Paul makes a statement in verses 13 and 14 that are vitally important for us today.

As needed, Paul instructs these men on qualities they need to possess. Paul writes these instructions with precision, as a military commander. They are written in the imperative present tense which means that they are commands which are to be obeyed constantly throughout life.

Paul's instruction in verses 13 and 14 says,

"Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love."

A. Be Alert

The first thing that Paul says to these men is to "be on the alert." Now this is a military term and it carries the meaning of standing watch, being on the lookout, or be ready at all times.

The attack is coming and you need to be ready for it.

There are many people who invite some seemingly small sin into their lives because it looks so cute. It's nothing all that big. It seems harmless enough until it begins to grow. It begins to roam your house until it becomes the biggest thing in your life.

The wildness and ferocity of it finally comes out, until you realize that you are afraid of it. Finally you wake up to the fact that is controlling you, and has the power to bring you irreparable harm or destroy you. It can rip you to shreds.

The Bible warns us:

"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Men, we need to be on alert. There are things out there that are seeking to devour us. The devil and the world do not want men who are on alert.

What does it mean to be on alert? To be on alert means to:

- Guard our eyes from lustful images
- Guard our thoughts from sinful dwellings
- Guard our hearts by filling them with the Bible
- Guard our speech by careful contemplation
- Guard our families by being the spiritual leader
- Guard our communities by serving the church and ministering to others

Men, so many times we find ourselves falling into sin because we allow sin to creep in. We do not take the necessary steps to always be watching for temptation and rooting it out when we see it.

We not only need to be on alert for ourselves, but also for our families.

We think we can enjoy sinful fruits and it won't hurt us. That is exactly the lie the devil told Adam and Eve.

Men, let us be on alert. Let us be proactive in our pursuit of holiness. Let us continually watch where we are, who we are with, what our minds are dwelling on, and what is going on around us and in the depths of our hearts.

Let us never think we have a handle on our own sin because it is with this attitude that we begin to get lazy and quit paying attention to ourselves.

The world and the Devil, even our own nature never stop attacking us, therefore we do not have the luxury of stepping off our watch.

Our families, our churches, our faith, and our very lives depend on it.

B. Stand Firm in the Faith

So, Paul gives this second command. (Be alert) Stand firm. Stand firm in what? What does it mean to stand firm?

To stand firm means to persevere, to keep your ground, and to not be moved. Well, what are we standing firm in? Men, we are to stand firm in our faith.

This is a very real thing and it is very important that we do this. Our failure to stand up for the things we believe in; our failure to call wrong "wrong" and to stand up for what is right has caused the church to slip into the background of society and now our voice, which used to be heard on the mountain tops, is only a faint whisper.

We have given ground on so many things in our lives.

First of all, in order to stand firm in our faith, we have to be grounded in our faith and that comes through a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship is grown and flourishes as we find ourselves spending time with him through prayer and in the Bible.

If we don't know and understand Scripture, then we cannot stand our ground on its principles. If we don't know that God is holy and calls us to be holy, then we won't know to love holiness and hate sin.

We will allow sin to creep in, to stand in the corners of our hearts, and to invade our lives. We will slowly but surely look just like the world.

Men we must stand strong. We must stand firm! We must not give up or give in!

We must:

- Love our wives as God commands us
- We must hide lust from our eyes
- We must not tolerate pride in our hearts
- We must not conform to the ways or the world
- We must not be ruled by possessions or money
- We must live by the word of God
- We must make Christ and his glory a value in our lives
- We must hate sin as much as God does
- We must stand firm in our jobs and not compromise biblical principles for the sake of advancement

We must stand firm men. There is too much at stake to give even an inch.

C. BE STRONG

Men, we are not only called to be on alert for the attack of the enemy, and to stand firm in our faith, we are called to be strong. Well, what kind of strength is Paul talking about? Bench pressing 500 lbs? Pulling a tractor? Winning a wrestling match?

These are not the types of strength Paul was referring to.

Christ desires us to be strong in the faith.

- Faithfulness
- Humility
- A servant's heart
- Forgiveness
- Gentleness
- kindness

One thing about strength is that if you don't grow in strength you lose your strength. If I don't lift for over a year, I can't expect to get back under a squat bar and squat what I did a year ago. Why? In order to be strong you must grow in strength.

How does that translate to our Christian walk? The same principle applies. The grace you grew in last year will not benefit you today. I heard a really great truth concerning this principle this week.

A young man said, "As I read the Bible I am not looking for some great truth, or a future salvation, or help for next year. I am reading the Bible because I need strength for today."

How true that statement is. Men, we must not only desire to be better men or better Christians in the future.

You must decide to be a better man each day. Every day you wake up is a chance, an opportunity that God has given you to become a stronger man than you were yesterday.

Yesterday's victories and defeats do not apply today.

While they help us learn and evaluate, a car cannot run on used gasoline. The tank has to be replenished for every trip.

Your soul, your heart, your mind, and your life need the grace and strength of God each and every day. Each day is a day to hope in Christ and to draw courage from him.

Each day is a day to grow in his wisdom and knowledge. Each day is a day to affect the world for Christ.

When you and I stop growing in Christ, when we quit searching the scriptures, when we cease to pray to him on a regular basis, when spending time with God's family quits being of value to you- it will not be long before those things that were not temptations become temptations, before that attitude that you had under control starts to come undone, before that sin that God helped you conquer raises its head.

We must remain strong in the grace of God by constantly growing in the grace of God.

D. ACT LIKE A MAN

The way that Paul uses the term, "act like men" means that we are to be brave. This could not more of a military term. It goes along perfectly with everything else Paul instructs.

We are to be alert on our post, we are to stand firm in the face of adversity, we are to be strong by growing in strength, and we are to be brave when we go into battle.

Men, whether you know it or not, if you are a child of God, if you have been redeemed by Christ, then you are in a war between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. The battle rages all around us.

The fight for righteousness and holiness is everywhere and I know that it may seem scary to stand up, to be strong, and to face the world and the attacks of the devil; I know it is easier sometimes to let sin in than to actually open up and deal with it; I know it is easier to let sin remain than to ask for help defeating it.

I know these things. I know the battle is all around you. I know it feels like it would be easier giving up and giving in; to live like the world would be easier than having and sticking to biblical principles.

But men, we must be brave. We must see the enemy for what it is. We must see the battle raging in our hearts and minds; in our families, at our jobs, and all around us; we must see that enemy called sin and that adversary named Satan and we must not give an inch, we must not shrink back, we must not be scared.

We must act like men! We must take up our armor, we must join with Christ and with the army of Christian men around us and we must stand and fight.

We must fight for our faith! We must fight for our homes and families! We must fight for the purity of our children! We must fight for the rights of the unborn! We must fight for the poor and the needy! We must fight for biblical manhood and womanhood!

We must fight to spread the gospel!

And yes, we will suffer loss and defeat. We will not win every battle, but we must get up, dust ourselves off, grab ahold of Christ with one arm and your Christian brother with the other and rejoin the battle.

Because if we fail to fight, if we fail to be brave, and if we fail to rejoin the battle when we fall down, we are not doing what God desires of us, what he calls us to do, what our families need us to do.

E. DO EVERYTHING IN LOVE

On the last command in verse 14 Paul seems to switch from a military command to a pastoral tone. He goes from shouting at us to be alert, to stand firm, to act like men, and to be strong, to telling us to do all we do in love.

Why would he do that? Why is that important? Why should that be what defines us?

John 13:35, *“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

1 John 4:7, *“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”*

The reason that we are to do all things in love; to cover our conversations with it, our marriages, our parenting, our jobs, our hobbies, the way we treat strangers and even those who are our enemies is because God is love and love is the defining character trait of God and of those he has redeemed.

The way you love others will set you apart from everyone else around you. The manner in which you show compassion and in how you care for others will demonstrate, will prove whether you are being the man God calls you to be.

Loving people as God loves them, as he loves you, will be the hardest thing you will ever do in life. It will be a lifelong endeavor that you won't be finished with until Christ returns.

But, above all else; it is the one thing that if we do, if we love God and love others we will fulfill all of the commands of God. By loving we complete the gospel mission.

Love:

- That boss @ work who gives you a hard time
- That coworker who always gets on your nerves

- Your spouse even when they are in the wrong
- That brother or sister in Christ who is in sin
- That person you had a fight with the other day
- God with all of your heart.

To begin with the love of God, his love for us, and allow ourselves to grow in our understanding of his love for us, we will naturally grow in two things:

- Our love for him
- Our love for others

What about you? Are you doing all you do in love?