

Victory in Christ Always

Introduction and Review

- Ministry involves pain caused by unreasonable people – rejection, scorn & contempt (2:1; 10:10; 11:5-6)
- There are wise alternatives to painful face-to-face meetings that address the issues, restores joy & expresses love – letter (v. 2-4)
- Strife & confusion between two or more church members causes pain for the entire church (v. 5)
- The purpose of church discipline is to produce repentance & change (v. 6)
- After repentance, the church should forgive, comfort & reaffirm love for the offender (v. 7-11)

I. Ministry That Is Troubling (v. 12-13)

A. Outward opportunity for effectiveness (v. 12)

God gives spiritual gifts for ministry & directs to places for ministry. God determines the progress & success of the gospel in any place – “a door was opened” (1Co. 16:9).

B. Inward turmoil for restlessness (v. 13)

*Every believer needs people with a common passion in ministry (Phil. 2:20 – **ἰσόψυχος**; 2Co. 8:23 = partner – **κοινωνός**; fellow worker – **συνεργός**). Waiting for Titus & concerns for Corinth caused anxiety. Anxiety & stress affects the decisions & ministry of church leaders/members – “So I took leave of them...”.*

Outward opportunity in ministry may still involve inward anxieties.

II. Ministry That Is Triumphal (v. 14-17)

A. Life & death results (v. 14-16a)

Regardless of our weaknesses, failures or troubles, Christ is always victorious (v. 14). The gospel message always succeeds in God’s intentions (v. 15-16a; Phil. 1:12-18; Is. 55:8-11). Preaching, proclaiming & teaching the gospel results in eternal life or death!

B. Overwhelming responsibility (v. 16b-17)

A believer’s involvement in the eternal life & death of another person is a crushing & overwhelming responsibility – “Who is sufficient...” (1Co. 1:18, 23). Paul was not in the gospel ministry to make money, but because God had called & commissioned him (v. 17).

Gospel ministry affects the eternal destiny of people & this is an overwhelming responsibility!