



Gems to Apply from the Final Word (1 Corinthians 16:13-24)

- Paul closes out his letter with a potpourri of commands, commendations, greetings, warnings, and words of his love toward the Corinthians. In spite of their sins and weaknesses, Paul loves the struggling saints in Corinth and wants to see their faith and witness for the Lord.
- There are six gems we can draw out of his final words to put on display in our lives as we seek to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord and a blessing to our brother and sisters in Christ.

① Be solid in your faith (16:13)

- Solid is not a word you would use to describe the Corinthian church or perhaps your own faith, but Paul commands that we pursue an ever-maturing life in Christ.
- He shares four imperatives for believers to keep on obeying:
 - **“be on the alert”**: The battle for truth demands that we be ever watchful as God’s people for bad (the devil-1 Pet 5:8-9, temptation-Matt. 26:41, indifference-Rev. 3:2, false teaching-Acts 20:28-31) and for good (the undated return of Jesus Christ (Matt. 24:42; 25:13).
 - **“stand firm in the faith”**: God wants us to build convictions that stands immovable on Scriptural grounds (Gal. 5:1; Phil. 1:27); 2 Thess. 2:15)
 - **“act like men”**: Act in a way that is befitting the qualities of a man. Don’t act like fragile infants (1 Cor. 3:1), but act like responsible mature adults (1 Cor. 13:11).
 - **“be strong”**: We don’t make ourselves strong, but we cooperate with the Holy Spirit who strengthens us (the passive voice – Eph. 3:16)

② Be saturated in your love (16:14)

- The central attitude and action that must continually flow in and through our lives is love (1 Cor 13). Obeying the commands is right and good, but without love, we become a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal (1 Cor. 13:1)
- God’s agape love always seeks what is best for others and it has many flavors (instruction, commands, correction, affirmation, accountability, admonishment, etc.). Love has a way of balancing everything out for the good of others and the glory of God.

③ Be submissive to your fellow servants (16:15-16)

- The Corinthians had a problem with authority, preferring to do things their own *“puffed up”* way.
- Paul recognizes that those who have *“devoted themselves for ministry to the saints”* (v. 15: like the *“household of Stephanas”*) and synergistically work hard together on behalf of other’s needs (*“helps in the work of the Lord and labors”* v 16) are worthy of to be followed and submitted to (the word *“subjection”* describes a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility or carrying a burden for others).

④ Be supportive of your faithful leaders (16:17-18)

- Paul mentions three servant leaders (Stephanas, Fortunatus, Achaicus) who made him very happy (“rejoice”) because they filled some ministry holes the Corinthians hadn’t accomplished (“*they have supplied what was lacking on your part*”)
- By this ministry, they “*refreshed*” (provided relief) Paul’s spirit and the Corinthians church (“*yours*”) and Paul calls them to “*acknowledge such men*” for this ministry of relief (Phil. 2:25-30; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7)

⑤ Be sincere in your greetings (16:19-21)

- Paul extends several greetings to the Corinthians and then commands them to “*greet one another*”.
- It is important for the family of God to display and share their affection for one another (“*greet one another with a holy kiss*”). This command assumes each believer will personally initiate a warm greeting to others whether you know them or not.

⑥ Be sold-out to your greatest love (16:22-24)

- Paul stunningly concludes his letter with some hard, but consequential words: “*If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed*”. Real Christianity is not just a confessional belief in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, but an affectionate love relationship with a loving Savior. Paul uses the word *phileo* (a tender affection of a close friend) rather than the word *agape* (a sacrificial love of the will) to describe this love.
- The shocker is to understand the consequence of being “*accursed*” for lacking this kind of love. The word “*accursed*” means to be devoted to destruction. It’s like a synonym for hell. Then, to make it even more grave, Paul uses the Aramaic word “*Maranatha*” which declares the coming of the Lord which brings blessing to the saints, but an everlasting judgment to those who fail to love the Lord.
- In Paul’s final benediction (v. 23-24), he reveals the source of this affectionate love to be the underserving “*grace of the Lord Jesus*” and then shares his love of the will (*agape*) for all who are “*in Christ Jesus*”.
- Ultimately, our problem is not our love for all the sinful things of this life, but failing to love the most important Person, Lord the Jesus Christ