

Paul's Closing Admonitions
By Trey Sullins

What would you do if you were saying goodbye to your brothers and sisters in your home congregation? Would you try to encourage them? Would you try to challenge them to stay faithful? In 2 Corinthians 13:11-14 we find Paul having to do something very similar. Near the end of his letter to them he gives them many encouragements and admonitions. The challenges that he gave the brethren at Corinth are some that we should look to and work to match as well!

The first exhortation is to "Become complete." The word complete means lacking nothing. This statement basically means put yourself in order. In other words, correct everything in your life to the way that it should be. It makes a lot of sense why the Holy Spirit would be telling the Christians at Corinth this because they were once people entrenched in sin (1 Corinthians 11:6-9) and now some of them were even doubting the inspired apostle (2 Corinthians 11-12). We should also strive to become complete. The everyday walk of a Christian should be that we work to correct those things that are lacking in our lives. In order to do this, we must first find those things that are lacking. This requires time and work to analyze our lives and find these problems. There was a mechanic who was installing a used part on a car. After finishing the job, the customer asked, "Was that old part in good condition?" The man replied, "I think it was, but I didn't really check it." He went on doing his work without even checking to see if there was a problem or not. This cannot be the case with our spiritual lives! We have to check ourselves to make sure that we are doing what we must (2 Corinthians 13:5).

The second exhortation is to "Be of good comfort." The word comfort means to call to ones' side. This word paints a beautiful picture of the relationship that we have with God. He brings us up close to Him and under His wing so that we might be safe and cared for. Notice also that Paul uses the action word "be". This gives the implication that the Christian must take action to receive this comfort as well. The action they must take is to get closer to God through proper biblical living faith which is belief and obedience. We must have this same comfort. God calls us to His side by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14) so that we might be obedient and be forgiven of sins (1 John 1:7). A lady once was in a bad place in life. She was caught up with drugs and other poor decisions. Though she claimed to pray to God daily, she made no personal attempt to get closer to Him. It's no wonder she never found the comfort that she desperately wanted. In order to be of good comfort, we must do our part too!

The third exhortation is to "be of one mind." Being of one mind means being in unity with each other. The Holy Spirit was giving instruction to the church at Corinth; therefore, He was telling them to be unified as one. If they had one mind, then they would be able to properly function as the one church. In a similar way, think about whenever you go on a trip somewhere and you visit a different congregation. You can usually tell very quickly if the congregation is of one mind. If it is of one mind, then the members are all in agreement in doing things according to God's word. If it is not of one mind, then the members are scattered in belief and the practices of the congregation will have added in things contrary to the Bible. That's why Paul's exhortation here is so important. It is also important for us to be of one mind. Philippians 1:27 sums up how this one mind should look in us. "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ". The things that we do should

be all centered around the gospel. We should not be one because we are “agreeing to disagree”. We should be one because we have all chosen to serve Christ.

If Paul wrote this with our name in the address line, would we be able to say that we have completed the task? These simple instructions truly are easy and fundamental when it comes to following God. We must always make sure that we are complete, comforted, and of one mind! By learning more and more about the gospel and growing in our Christian walks, then these things will come to us.