

## The Marks of True Leaders – Part 1 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

### Introduction:

1. One of the greatest needs in the church today is spiritual leadership - people who will dare to be leaders for God, on the frontline in the battle against Satan.
2. Today, people are so hesitant to completely commit themselves to anything. This carries over into church life. People want to straddle the fence. They want enough of God and church to soothe their conscience, but not enough commitment to alter their lifestyle.
3. But a local church must have people who are leaders and are willing to commit if that local church is to accomplish anything in God's work.
4. As Paul closes this book, he makes special mention of some leaders in the church at Corinth: Stephanas (vs. 15, 17), Fortunatus (vs. 17), Achaicus (vs. 17).
  - Paul encouraged the Corinthians to submit to these godly leaders that were in their local church. vs. 16
5. Every believer should desire to not only become a follower of Jesus Christ, but also a leader for Jesus Christ. A leader is somebody who is actually influencing people for Christ.
6. Anybody can become a leader for Christ. Notice in verse 15 that Paul says that they were the firstfruits of Achaia (Greece). In other words, these were some of Paul's first converts in the region of Achaia, where Corinth was located. cf. 1:16
  - This means that the household of Stephanas had only been saved less than three or four years. Yet they had quickly grown into respected leaders in the local church. Even more than that, Paul himself obviously had a great deal of respect for them.
  - In God's work, leaders aren't **born** leaders, they are **grown** leaders. Leaders are grown as they are fed God's Word and involved in the work of God.
7. How do we know when somebody is growing into a leader? What makes a good leader in the local church? This text lays it out for us in very clear terms.

### First, a leader leads, but loves. vs. 13, 14, 22, 24

1. Verse 13 is a picture of a tough, strong, determined, military officer. Paul says that this is the way a leader for God must be.
  - "*Watch ye*" - vigilant, always on the look-out, keen awareness of his surroundings
  - "*Stand fast in the faith*" - immovable, firm and stationary; they understand sound doctrine and won't be moved away from it. This is the opposite of **Ephesians 4:14**.
  - "*Quit you like men*" - this literally means "to act manly." The leader for God is not a wimp.
  - "*Be strong*" - increasing in vigor, passionate and zealous about the things of God.
2. A leader is not afraid to lead. He is not afraid to confidently say, "This is the way. Follow me and let's get the job done." He understands God's Word and is not going to waffle or back down in any way.

3. This is why **Titus 1:9** says that a leader must "*(hold) fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.*"
  - "Hold fast" means that a leader has a solid grasp of God's Word and is able to powerfully communicate it to others and stand for its truth. **Titus 1:10-11**
4. But notice the next verse in **1 Corinthians 16:14**, "*Let all your things be done with charity.*"
5. Isn't this amazing? After a rough, tough, military type of encouragement to stand and be strong, Paul says, "But make sure you do everything in love."
6. What does this mean? It means that we don't equate verse 13 with arrogance, rudeness, with being obnoxious and unkind. Some preachers don't think you are really preaching unless you are brash, mean-spirited, and offending people. Paul basically says, "Stand solidly for the truth, but do it with a spirit of love."
7. A leader for God does not lead by force or intimidation. **2 Timothy 2:24-25**
  - He doesn't drive people from behind with a whip like cattle, yelling and screaming.
  - He is out in front lovingly leading people like a shepherd would his sheep.
8. A leader for God is strong, but also a lover!
  - He loves Jesus Christ. vs. 22 (Anathema - accursed) (Maranatha - our Lord has come) - Jesus Christ is God's final test. What have you done with Christ?
  - He loves people. vs. 24 (What a precious way to end this book which has been a book of rebuke - Paul wanted them to know that he loved them.)
9. Do you desire to be a leader and influence people for Christ? You must grow in your understanding of God's Word so that you can confidently stand on God's Word, but you must also learn to speak God's truth in love. **Ephesians 4:15**