



SPIRITUAL FATHERS DELIVER HARD MERCIES AND POWERFUL ENCOURAGEMENTS

1 Corinthians 4:8–21

A HIGHER WISDOM



INTRO

This morning, we are at a pivot passage or a hinge passage. In these first four chapters, Paul has been establishing a theological foundation. He's been making assessments of the lives of the people in the church, and as the church together, and then in the next chapters, he's going to get to the specific issues, sins that exist in the church.

But first, he wants them to know this: Fatherly leaders in the church are a gift from God, given to make assessments of your life, provide an example to follow, and offer corrections that will shape you into the image of Christ. In the New Testament, the church is often spoken of in familiar terms. We are a church family. And Paul teaches in these verses that pastors and elders are the fatherly leaders of the family, of a local congregation.

While Paul issues the exhortations in this passage as an apostle with apostolic authority, they apply to those who are called as elders and pastors in the local church today. But let's be clear: we do not have the same authority Paul and the other apostles held. They were blessed with special authority to establish the church. No one has that today. The apostles set the example, and we, today, follow the

pattern. That is a fact established in this passage of Scripture, but we all might struggle to accept it. Accepting a fatherly role in someone's life is a significant responsibility.

As a church leader, accepting this role in other people's lives could seem arrogant or even inappropriate; it could even seem like an imposition. Who am I to take this place in your life? In fact, on Monday, when I first outlined this sermon, I was careful to avoid "father" language because it sounded so presumptuous to me! Yet there it is in God's word, and so I must wrestle with it, seeking to understand what it entails and, by God's grace, perform my duties with both authority and humility.

For you as a church member, this can be even more daunting. Discussing fatherhood, advocating for it in a society of rampant fatherlessness, is a difficult task. Fathers are to model God's love for their children, but in our society, fathers often abandon their families. Abuse and neglect of children are all too common and may cause people to bristle or even rebel against anything that resembles fatherly authority.

Young people, especially young men, who endured difficult relationships with harsh, angry, or abusive fathers, often react, sometimes even violently, against any implication that they should submit to authority. This is a major problem in the world today, and a significant problem in the church as well.

Others who were blessed to be raised by godly fathers who offered care, protection and guidance see loving, godly authority as a blessing meant for their good and their flourishing. And yet, there is danger here as well, so a warning is in order.

Evil men, posing as ministers of the gospel, can often sense that a young person's positive experience of a father's love has resulted in a willingness to submit to fatherly authority. Seeing an opportunity, they leverage that trust into personal advantage, and often into

sexual gratification for themselves. It is among the most evil of all the various spiritual abuse tactics, and it is lamentably common today. It is rampant, as I can tell you from various news reports and from first-hand experience with exactly this type of predator.

This morning, your experience with your biological father, or maybe your experience with an abusive spiritual father-figure, will play into how you receive this message. But this familial, loving parental role is the metaphor used in Scripture to describe the role between pastors and church members, so we need to understand what it does and doesn't mean.

So I encourage you, as you listen, as you read, as you pray, as you engage in further study, to accept what God's word says as true and to pursue the ideal it puts forth. And in the process, I hope that healing will come to wounds that have previously been inflicted. And I hope that going forward, your experience will be a positive one.

Here, then, are three important exhortations that Paul would like his readers to grasp about the role of spiritual fathers in their lives:

1. Heed a Fatherly Assessment Of Your Life (vv. 8-13)

2. Follow a Fatherly Example In Your Life (vv. 14-17)

3. Accept a Fatherly Correction For Your Life (vv. 18-21)

The application point for each major idea will start with the words "When a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader..." This is important as a precursor and a limiter. You are not to follow the example or submit to just *anyone* and everyone who claims a position of authority in your life. Only those who are proven as faithful should be trusted. For all others, there is no obligation to submit.

In fact, there may be an obligation to defy and expose, as in the cases I mentioned a minute ago. If any man leverages fatherly influence and authority for personal gratification, you need to defy

and expose. Such men will misuse their false authority not just to abuse their victims, but to shame them into silence. As a result, when a man does this, he always does it to multiple victims over many years, not just one victim one time. So beware.

With those caveats and qualifications out of the way, here is Paul's teaching. First, he would encourage you to...

1. Heed a Fatherly Assessment Of Your Life (vv. 8-13)

When a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader assesses your life and makes some stinging observations, listen up.

As we mentioned in our group reading plan recently, the Bible was written and, therefore, should be read in a certain tone of voice. The proper tone of voice here is sarcasm. (Yes, sarcasm can be a blessing, but like anger, it is tricky to wield well. Paul seemed to possess the gift of sanctified sarcasm.) So let's read this, then, in the tone in which it was written.

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

Paul here uses sharp irony to disarm their consuming pride. How do we know they were so prideful? We'll see in the next chapters: sexual immorality, lawsuits, distorted views of marriage and singleness, abuse of Christian freedom, idolatry, profaning the Lord's Supper, misuse of spiritual gifts, etc.

But before he gets to all of that, here's where he starts.

- a. **"Already you have all you want!"** You are satisfied, satiated! You are stuffed to the gills with blessings! You are filled, with

your every wish satisfied. You're like Disney princesses at the end of the movie: lively, happy, dancing, singing your lines.

- b. **"Already you have become rich!"** You are obviously richly supplied! You have obtained and taken hold of many blessings!
- c. **"Without us you have become kings!"** Already, you are masters of your environment. Self-sufficient, self-governing, self-rewarding! And I wish you really were all of these things, then we could join along in your glorious rule!

Are they actually any of these things? No. If they were, what need would they have for Christ?

Paul here is rebuking their triumphalism. They are busy celebrating their successes and achievements. The irony is that there is little evidence of success, and whatever they think they have achieved, the evidence shows it has resulted in a church that is worldly, carnal, and divided. They were living, as we have seen and as we will see further, in so many ways that were beneath the upward call of Christ, in earthly ways, in ways Paul has described as "merely human."

This triumphalism was leading to pride, which was leading to abuses of liberty, which was leading to carnality, which was leading to sin. So Paul assesses their lives and counsels not triumphalism but something quite different.

First, he contrasts their lives with his and the other apostles.

9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

"I think God has put us on display as the lowest rank, the end-of-the-line, the caboose on the train. We are like death-row prisoners.

We have been put on the stage of a theatre for all the world to look at."

They are on display. What kind of display? The NLT translates this part "like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die." This is referring to the ancient custom that accompanied great war triumphs in ancient Rome. A celebration was arranged when a Roman army commander returned from a successful campaign. He'd be all decked out in gold and purple and wearing a crown. He rode a four-horse chariot through the street with his army and some of the spoils of the war. And as part of this procession, which could sometimes last for days, in a high-visibility area, prisoners of war, and sometimes their families, were in chains that were soon to be executed.

That's where Paul says he and the apostles would be in such a procession. Not on the chariot, decked out in gold and purple. Not parading through the streets receiving honour and praise. Not living like kings, but living like captives, like soldiers of war. Living as a Roman prisoner of war was not an enjoyable plight. The Romans had prisons built not to house prisoners for the long term but so they could wait to be executed.

They are on display and have become a spectacle. Paul is alluding here to cultural practices that no longer exist but are best imagined as scenes from the movie *Gladiator*, starring Russell Crowe. Crowe's character in *Gladiator* is a prisoner destined for the Colosseum, where he will be thrown to the lions or the gladiators to be put to death as entertainment. Such people were considered less than nothing. Imagine it: your life being worth nothing more than a few minutes of public pain before being brutally killed for the entertainment of others.

He goes on...

10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

More sarcasm... "We are seen as fools for Christ's sake." The Greek word here is the one from which we get the word "moron." "That's us, but you see yourselves as wise! Sensible! Prudent! Intelligent! We are weak, feeble, infirm, sickly. We are pitiful weaklings, but you are like Navy Seals! You are glorious, distinguished, esteemed. We are unrecognized, and if recognized, only with reproach."

Paul is getting at something here. What is he getting at? He wants to cause them to ask, to wonder, "Yeah, why is it that our lives look so different from theirs?" He wants them to see that something is wrong here. "Something is out of balance, you Corinthians. Either your environment is very different from ours (he knows it's not), or you are not speaking the same message to people that we are."

"People seem to consider you wise, and you are comfortable, but when we speak the truth of the gospel, we are met with resistance, abuse and persecution. People seem to consider you strong, but when we speak the truth of the gospel, people call us weak-minded fools. People seem to consider you honourable, but when we speak the truth of the gospel, people try to turn others against us by telling lies about us."

"If you're preaching the same message we are, why is the response so different?" "Obviously, you are much better at this than we are. We could probably learn from you! You are professionals, and we are amateurs! Oh, what's that? Oh, you leave out anything that might offend them? Oh, OK."

"Well, wake up."

Paul pulls out all the stops here. He'll use sarcasm, irony, playing dumb, whatever it takes to get through to them. Their big problem is

that they want the best of both worlds. They want the wisdom of God and the eternal benefits it brings, but they want to keep the wisdom, honour and respect of man and enjoy those more tangible benefits in their daily lives. But you can't have it both ways.

Now remember, Paul is in no way calling their salvation into question. Remember the opening of the letter. Before anything else, Paul establishes their identity and assures them of their standing with Christ before confronting their behaviour. His confrontations are not grounded in moralism or rewards for good behaviour. His warnings are not "Do this, or stop doing this, or else God will stop loving you." He's starting with their already established identity.

They are...

- Sanctified in Christ
- Call to be saints
- Given the grace of God
- Enriched in speech and knowledge
- Possessing every gift they need

He's told them that...

- God will sustain them to the end
- They will be guiltless on the last day
- They were called into fellowship with Jesus

And maybe at this point, as a result of Paul's sarcasm, they'd realize that the lives they are living are still almost completely worldly. Because I think his tone changes here, and he says, "Listen, here is what life as a believer in this culture is going to look like if you're living a life of faithfulness..."

11 To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12 and we labor, working with our own hands.

What's the word picture here? Perhaps the best parallel is to imagine the homeless in the downtown area. This is a total contrast between the Corinthian believers and their leaders. And it's completely upside down, isn't it? Isn't it usually the leaders who live better than the followers? Isn't it usually leaders who have more resources, more perks, less danger, fewer vulnerabilities? Something is off, and Paul hopes they are beginning to wonder what it is.

He pivots now from describing their state to describing their behaviour. How do the apostles, living under these conditions, respond to these life circumstances? His answer is: exactly the way Christ did.

When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat.

"When we are abused with insults, we bless, praise, and speak well of those who hurl these insults at us. When we are persecuted, we endure it. We don't lash out. When people speak of us with hostility, seeking to injure our reputations, we draw close to them and encourage them."

How much lower can you get in the various strata of society? Well, hang on, Paul goes there...

We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

"We are seen as filth, like scum..." and the sense of the word points to what gets scraped off dirty dishes. We're like the scummy residue that floats on top of overused water." And the Greek word for refuse referred to "criminals kept at the public expense, to be thrown into the sea, or otherwise killed, at the outbreak of a pestilence..." In other words, something routinely offered to the gods as an appeasement. They had no more value than that. The word referred to criminals who were thrown into the sea as an offering to Poseidon.

In all of this, Paul uses then-current cultural references to make a single point: we are seen as less than nothing. We have no worth or value in this society. We are mere fools and pawns of no consequence. Why are you held in such a different regard?

Paul here is assessing their lives. And when a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader, which Paul is, assesses your life and makes some stinging observations, listen up.

Second, Paul would advise us to

2. Follow a Fatherly Example In Your Life (vv. 14-17)

When a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader sets a good example, follow it.

14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

He's not saying all of this just for the pleasure of chewing them out. There is a purpose. It's not to shame them, but to warn them. When you warn someone, it's because you feel they are in danger. Paul feels they are in danger. "It is dangerous to live the way you are living!"

In that society, far more than in ours, believing the gospel and living faithfully according to it would mark you as very different. It would set you apart as "other." So here is Paul's warning: "You seem to be accepted in society. Your lives seem to look just like theirs, and nothing like ours. If you are no different from the world, how do you know you're not still part of that world?" He's not saying they *are*, but he is saying they are awfully close, and he wants them to take note of their trajectory.

Remember back in 3:1, where he laments that he could not address them as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ? He is getting at a similar problem here. "You are dangerously close to being both in the world and of it. The way you live your life tells the story."

And he warns them not as anonymous bystanders, but as his "beloved children." There is something to this relationship between him and the people in the church in Corinth that is based on more than mere acquaintance. He is not just some distant authority who pontificates in isolation. Listen to what he says next:

15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Paul's contrast here between a guardian (or instructor) and a father is rooted in another cultural tradition of that time. In wealthier families, there would often be a legally appointed overseer (akin to what we today might call a nanny). This person was authorized to train a child by administering discipline and giving instruction. This can be an honourable position, but it is one more easily filled than that of a biological parent. Many people can train for this position and be deployed to various families, but again, the biological component is missing, and so there is less of a bond.

Paul here is saying that he is their father, spiritually but *metaphorically*, and there is no insistence on his part that they call him "Father Paul" going forward. That's not his point. He's not introducing a new honorific title; he's employing a metaphor to describe both his fatherly authority and his fatherly affection.

Doing otherwise, of course, would violate Jesus' command in Matthew 23:9 "**And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.**" Even there, Jesus was rebuking the Pharisees for their abuse of power, not saying there was anything

wrong with someone having a fatherly love and influence in others' lives.

Paul uses our knowledge of this biological bond as an analogy for spiritual parentage. There is genuine love between pastor and people in a way that is different than the affection that can be felt between, say, university professors and students. There is a proper, familial love embedded uniquely in the life of a church family.

Now, to get a little personal about this: this is one of the things that helped me discern my next steps at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025. When I finished my assignment in Aylmer, at first it was a relief because some very hard things had happened there over my 15 years. But after six months or so, I realized that if my calling was now to serve only other pastors, both local and scattered abroad, I was going to feel like something was missing.

I could coach, but my advice would be applied in environments in which I was never present. I could counsel, but there was a neat boundary line separating me from my counselees between sessions. To this day, I do both of these, and I believe God uses my efforts to help other pastors survive and thrive in their ministries.

But what I came to realize was that I didn't want *only* that; I didn't want to serve *only* people who were scattered abroad. I wanted a church family to love and who would love me on a daily and weekly basis. I wanted a church family to walk with, share burdens with, praying for one another, weep together, and celebrate together. And that's what I have found among you. And I'm so thankful!

That is the connection Paul is talking about here. Paul holds a unique office in their lives. He is not just a tutor or instructor, but a parental figure, a fatherly authority. Let me say again, there is a measure of discomfort for me in expressing my role here in the same light, and yet, this is where the Scripture leads us. We will continue to figure out exactly what that looks like together as we go.

But moving along, there is a “then” that grows out of what Paul has just said.

16 I urge you, *then*, be imitators of me.

Paul's reasoning is:

- “Because God has assigned me to you as a spiritual father...
- And because this requires that I be a faithful servant and steward...
- And because it is the expectation (more so in that culture than in ours) that sons will imitate their fathers...
- Therefore, imitate me.”

“Imitate me” is another of those biblical statements that is a principle that applies to church leaders, to elders and pastors, today, that causes us to go, “Wow, I don't know if I'm up for that!” It hits me with the same weight as the verse that says I will have to give an account for the souls in my care. Like, I'm not eager to have that responsibility on my shoulders, but I shoulder that responsibility because God has assigned it to me. Ditto this statement: “Imitate me...”

And yet, there it is, again and again...

- 1 Cor. 11:1 - “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”
- Phil. 3:17 - “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.”
- 2 Thes. 3:7 - “For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle when we were with you...”

Heb. 6:11-12 - “And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

Paul urges them to imitate him, but he is not the only one; there is a backup plan. Actually, the backup plan is mentoring and multiplication.

17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

He can send them Timothy, one of his proteges, to remind them of what Paul teaches, and to be a model for living it out.

Leaders are given to the church for a purpose. To lead by example, but also this... That purpose is found in Eph 4. We are given to "equip the saints [that's you] for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."

Paul's desired destination for these "infants in Christ" is adulthood. It's spiritual maturity. It's the kind of growing up where people's faith is no longer governed by waves of emotion, or winds of controversy, or the hurricane of current events. It sounds like parenting, doesn't it? We model maturity, and we do this by our free obedience to Christ, our growth in holiness and sanctification, and our living all of that out in front of you, and our inviting you to imitate us.

And the way to live the Christian life, Paul says, is to become, in the eyes of the world, a spectacle, a fool, a weakling, a person who is not thought highly of. It is highly unlikely, for example, that you will both

hold the line on biblical truth and find popularity and acceptance in this world. If you are going to live a life of gospel faithfulness, some measure of persecution will come. Hardship will come. Trials will come. Abuse will come. Slander will happen. How will you respond?

We have all lived in an age of great advantage. To this point, very few of us have been excluded from anything because of our faith. But if you look at the direction we are headed as a culture, that type of exclusion is becoming a reality. We are living in a time and place that knows less and less about the gospel. Being a Christian and living life or running a business as a Christian who is faithful to God's word is a choice that is beginning to have certain implications, financial and otherwise.

These things will come. It will soon be time to decide how you will respond, and it will be helpful if you have good examples to follow. Paul instructs us: when a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader sets a good example, follow it.

Last, Paul advises this:

3. Accept a Fatherly Correction For Your Life (vv. 18-21)

When a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader offers you a correction, act on it.

18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

Some of them thought Paul was bluffing. We see some of this arrogant attitude in the next chapter. 5:1-2 **"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn?"**

The message to the arrogant in Corinth is, "Wait till your father gets home, and you will see whether or not he is serious!"

19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

What kind of people are these impostors? Do they speak with words of eloquent wisdom, crafted to convince people of their own intelligence and ability to capture an audience? Or do they humble themselves and preach the message of the cross? Everyone will find out when Paul gets there. As D.A. Carson so eloquently puts it: "He is going to expose them for the empty, religious windbags that they are."

And then, finally, Paul says...

21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

Arrogance was leading to tolerance of sin! But Paul will bring correction one way or another, because much is at stake.

You know, if you are a parent, that you're always trying softer measures with your kids before harder ones. You hope they will always straight-up obey your commands with joy and proper delight! And most of your kids usually do, am I right? What a blessed, sanctified bunch of toddlers I'm sure we have here.

But when that doesn't work, you have to make a decision. Is this worth taking to the next level? Is there something at stake here that, if not corrected, will lead to more dire consequences in my child's life? That's what good discipline is for, right? It is making small corrections before larger consequences arrive.

So while you hope the soft word yields the desired response, if you are serious about discipline, you follow through. That's what Paul is

saying here. "I'm writing this nice letter. It's just words. I hope it has the desired effect. But if it doesn't, there are corrections to be made, and there is a lot at stake, so I am willing to make the corrections hard, loud, and authoritative if necessary."

Church leaders are given authority to teach, protect, guide, and discipline the church. So when a proven, trustworthy fatherly leader offers you a correction, act on it.

CONCLUSION

Who are the fatherly spiritual leaders in your life who deliver hard mercies and powerful encouragements? I can tell you who they are not—and this is not something Paul could have said in his time. They are *not* your favourite preacher whom you watch on YouTube or listen to via podcast. These preachers can be helpful, but God has not placed you in their family or under their authority and guidance.

As God has designed it, the fatherly spiritual leaders in your life who deliver hard mercies and powerful encouragements are the elders and pastors of the local church to which you belong. Hi, nice to meet you... I have some questions for you:

- Do you know these leaders? Do you really know us?
- Have you examined the example of our lives?
- Have you looked under the hood?
- Are we proven and trustworthy, as God's word demands we must be if we are to serve God's church as overseers?

Hebrews 13:7 admonishes us to **"Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith."**

Are the leaders of the church family you belong to faithful servants and stewards of the mysteries of God? If they are not, then this is not

a safe place to learn or to grow. And if they are, then you should accept their assessments of your life, follow their example in your life, and accept their corrections for your life.

The consistent message of the New Testament is that fatherly spiritual leaders in the local church are a blessing from God for your good. But let's add two qualifiers, two "ifs".

1. Fatherly spiritual leaders are a blessing from God for your good *if* they are in fellowship with the ultimate Father, our Father in heaven. If that is not a reality in the life of one who presents himself as a fatherly spiritual leader, there is great danger, and you should run far away.
2. Fatherly spiritual leaders are a blessing from God for your good if they encourage you to imitate them only as they imitate Christ. If they demand that you imitate them in any way that they are not imitating Christ, decline the invitation. They, too, are under a higher authority, and it is to that higher authority that they must show ultimate allegiance.

Pastors and elders are not the Chief Shepherds; we are undershepherds. In the same way, as fatherly spiritual leaders, we do not hold the place of ultimate primacy or authority in your lives. This family does not belong to us. We are, at best, secondary influences who point only to the primary authority who is ultimately in command.

Jesus died to save you from your sins; we did not. When you are baptized, it is in his name, not ours. In all things, we want to deflect your allegiance to us over to Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, who died a painful and meritorious death so that you would not need to suffer for eternity for your sins. We didn't do that for you; he did.

All the work that we do in our capacity as leaders points to these great acts of love that Jesus perfectly performed.

So, as Paul has been saying over and over, give your ultimate allegiance to the one who gave his life for you.

You serve him, and we will serve him by serving you. And together we will bring glory to the one who deserves it all.

Let's Pray.

Discussion

Introduction

1. How does our modern context of widespread fatherlessness and tragic spiritual abuse make it difficult for many to embrace the biblical metaphor of pastors as "spiritual fathers"?

Point 1: Heed a Fatherly Assessment Of Your Life (vv. 8-13)

2. Paul used "sanctified sarcasm" to address the Corinthians' triumphalism. Why do you think sarcasm was the most effective tool to wake them up from their pride?

3. The apostles responded to being reviled by blessing, and to slander by entreating. Do you respond the same way when you experience these hardships?

Point 2: Follow a Fatherly Example In Your Life (vv. 14-17)

4. Paul contrasts the role of a hired guardian with that of a father. What specific qualities does a "fatherly spiritual leader" bring to a local church family that a distant instructor or coach cannot?

5. Paul's command to "imitate me" carries a heavy weight. What makes this command so intimidating for leaders, and why is it nevertheless a necessary part of Christian discipleship?

6. The sermon warns that holding the line on biblical truth will increasingly have financial and social implications in our culture. How can observing the faithful example of a spiritual father help us navigate these impending trials?

Point 3: Accept a Fatherly Correction For Your Life (vv. 18-21)

7. Some people in Corinth thought Paul was bluffing about coming to correct them. Why does spiritual arrogance often lead to the tolerance of sin within a church body?

8. The sermon states that church leaders are given authority to teach, protect, guide, and discipline. Why do we often gladly accept the teaching and guidance but resist the discipline?

9. When a "proven, trustworthy fatherly leader" offers correction, the application is to "act on it." What are the practical steps of acting on a correction we receive from a church elder?

Conclusion

10. Why is it dangerous to treat our favourite YouTube or podcast preachers as our primary spiritual authorities?