



## PART 2

# PAUL IN CORINTH: LEADERSHIP UNDER FIRE

## Chapter Five

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### CONSOLATION ABOUNDING IN CHRIST

Here we observe yet another indispensable principle of leadership: *A leader has empathy for others.*

#### **LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLE #11**

#### **A LEADER HAS EMPATHY FOR OTHERS**

*Empathy* is the ability to identify with another person so much that you feel what he feels (cf. [Hebrews 4:15](#)). It is essential to true compassion, sensitivity, understanding, and comfort.

#### **Hebrews 4:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup>“For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.”

Others were feeling the pangs of repentance ([2 Corinthians 7:8–10](#)).

#### **2 Corinthians 7:8-10 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>“For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—

<sup>9</sup>I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the *point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the *will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

<sup>10</sup>For the sorrow that is according to the *will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

Paul felt their pain, and he was eager to comfort them in all their grief. He assured them that his hope for them—his confidence in them—was steadfast.

And his desire was for them to share in the consolation he enjoyed, just as they had experienced their share of suffering.

Paul had much for which to rebuke the Corinthians. And he did go on to reprimand them with some firm and necessary words at numerous key points in the long epistle. But it is significant that he *began* this epistle with such an expression of empathy for them. Despite their failings, he remained loyal to them and empathetic toward them.

Leaders must give their people room to fail. People need encouragement rather than scorn when they struggle. They respond to the one they serve when he has sincere empathy in their anguish and disappointment. People need to be built up when they fail, not further flattened. The wise leader doesn't ever need to run roughshod over people. Leadership is ultimately *about* people, not just sterile objectives and strategies that can be written on paper.

That certainly does not rule out legitimate reproof and correction when needed (cf. [2 Timothy 3:16](#)). But reproof and correction can be done—and should be done—in a context of empathy and edification, as Paul did here.

**2 Timothy 3:16 (NASB)**

**<sup>16</sup>“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”**

He was a faithful and compassionate leader, and his love for the Corinthians is therefore evident in every verse of the epistle. Such loyalty and empathy are essential for good leadership. Paul knew that, and as we shall observe in the chapters to come, it colored all his dealings with the troubled Corinthian church.

## Chapter Six

# PAUL DEFENDS HIS SINCERITY

**Dishonesty and artificiality are incompatible with true leadership.** The leader who engages in double-dealing or deception will very quickly lose his following. Remember the first principle of leadership we observed in chapter 1 is that a leader must be trustworthy. **Underhandedness, indecision, infidelity,** and even **ambiguity** all sabotage trust and subvert leadership. And rightfully so. **Insincerity is not a quality good people should tolerate in their leaders.**

As we noted briefly in the previous chapter, false teachers in Corinth had seized on the apostle Paul's change of travel plans (he had canceled half of a planned double visit to Corinth), and they were evidently exploiting that incident in order to portray Paul as vacillating, unreliable, two-faced, cunning, and insincere (cf. [1 Corinthians 4:18–19](#)).

**1 Corinthians 4:18-19 (NASB)**

**<sup>18</sup>“Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.**

**<sup>19</sup>But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power.”**

**CH-110 LEADERSHIP 1**

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**Lecture # 25**



So Paul's first order of business in 2 Corinthians (after assuring the Corinthians of his personal devotion to them) was to answer that charge.