



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Leadership Series: (FACING OPPOSITION)

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Here is our next Bible study/devotional in the series on leadership. We develop these for our weekly 30 minute meetings and as a desk devotional for others who are not able to join us this time.

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul faced opposition after he turned the leadership over to others in the church he established in Corinth (south of Athens, Greece today). While Paul concentrated on building another church in Ephesus (in today's nation of Turkey), false teachers infiltrated the Corinthian church. They discredited Paul, undermined the teaching, and condoned immorality. What are your options when others criticize your policy decisions and question your fitness to lead? How well do you handle opposition?

LEADERS DO NOT ABDICATE THEIR ROLE IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

*1 Corinthians 4:2 "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*¹

Paul, like most servant leaders, was in a quandary. Anything he said in self defense would be twisted into another accusation and used against him. Comments in defense of his character would be used as proof that he was proud, egotistical, or boastful. Yet Paul had to defend himself. God had equipped and appointed Paul to lead the church at Corinth. Paul deeply cared for the Corinthians and was not about to abandon them to evil and spiritually corrupt leaders.

A LEADER CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE

*Exodus 17:4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these people? They are ready to stone me!"*²

Popular author and Pastor John MacArthur qualifies Moses' statement in a contemporary venue. "One truth every leader will eventually discover is that people are shockingly fickle. It's amazing how easily they can be swayed by lies about a leader whom they know and love." A government leader who is a principled person seems to be targeted by the media. Gossip tabloids publish deliberate lies to discredit well-known people.³

RESPONDING TO OPPOSITION:

1. Bypass the attackers: Paul developed a very carefully-worded letter, addressed directly to the people.
2. Disarm those who attempt to label you proud, egotistical, or boastful: Throughout this letter, Paul used the editorial "we" as a humble substitute for the first-person singular pronoun. He referred to himself as "the least of the Apostles..." (1 Corinthians 15:9-10).
3. Appeal to their hearts: Paul started his letter with two questions that anticipated a negative answer. Did he need to start over and prove his commitment and devotion to them? Did he need letters of commendation to establish credibility with them? (2 Corinthians 3:1-5). He left the questions with them.
4. Remind them of the years you worked with them and your friendship: The attack on Paul's character was an attempt to destroy his credibility. They insinuated that Paul had a hidden agenda, a sinful motive, or a secret life. He reminded the people that they knew him well enough to recognize a lie! They had observed his life and had seen his godly character firsthand.
5. Point out the testimonial from God: There a church was carved out of a vile culture to the glory of God. The Corinthians themselves were a living validation of Paul's leadership.

*2 Timothy 2:25 Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts and they will learn the truth.*⁴

A Prayer:

Father God, help me to defend the truth, not myself. Show me how to point to Your results not my policies. Help me to focus on the objective not the critics. Guide my tongue in all I say. Mostly Lord, keep my heart pure as I represent You to these Your people! I pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

¹ The Holy Bible. King James Version. (Public domain).

² The Holy Bible. New Living Translation. (Tyndale House). 2007.

³ John MacArthur, Called to Lead. (Thomas Nelson Inc.) pp90-91.

⁴ The Holy Bible. New Living Translation. (Tyndale House). 2007.

DEVOTIONAL DISCUSSION

LEADERSHIP/STAFF/GUESTS: WEDNESDAYS 12 NOON, GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM: 264 WEST