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## Onwards to Corinth *Acts 18:1-17*

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If there is one thing that is constant it is that we all are subject to discouragement. There is no shortage of discouragements to hinder the work of God. The Bible is full of men of God who at times became discouraged. And you and I get discouraged from time to time.

There are three things that I think contributed to Paul's discouragement in the ministry.

Firstly, The Large Strain of the Work. Paul comes to the largest and most wicked city in Greece. There was so much work to be done and the largeness of the work is discouraging.

Secondly, The Little Success of the Work. While he has seen some come to the Lord he still sees the masses of people rejecting the truth and that is discouraging.

Then finally, The Lonely Service of the Work. He has to do a lot of the work alone or with just one or two at his side. You would think more would get involved!

One of the greatest God given encouragements is friends. What a blessing Aquila and Priscilla were to Paul. They became his best and closest friends.

Then God sent Silas and Timothy from Macedonia to Corinth to reunite with Paul. So God has not only blessed Paul with two new friends but brought back to him two familiar friends.

I think you should stand for what is right even if you have to stand-alone. Thank God for friends who God puts in your path and in your life who will encourage you in the work of the Lord.

In 1782 Charles Simeon was appointed pastor of Trinity Church in England. 5 years, 7 years But the many in the congregation did not want Simeon they wanted Bro. Hammond to be their So he had to set up chairs in the aisles and in the corners so that those who came could sit.

The question is what was it that kept Charles Simeon going forward in the midst of this most discouraging situation? It was this. While many did not want him, some did. While many did not come, some did. While many were unaffected by his ministry, many were. While much was discouraging, he saw hope in the situation. Here is what he wrote:

*"In this state of things I saw no remedy but faith and patience. The passage of Scripture which subdued and controlled my mind was this, 'The servant of the Lord must not strive.' It was painful indeed to see the church, with the exception of the aisles, almost forsaken; but I thought that if God would only give a double blessing to the congregation that did attend, there would on*

*the whole be as much good done as if the congregation were doubled and the blessing limited to only half the amount. This comforted me many, many times, when, without such a reflection, I should have sunk under my burden."*

We can either dwell on the negative and be discouraged or we can encourage ourselves on the positive results.

While it is true that friends encourage us and positive results encourage us the greatest encouragement of all is the Lord himself. The Lord speaks to Paul and tells him,

Friends may not be there. There may be no earthy presence there at all but don't be afraid to speak up for I am with you. Here is the promise of God's presence. Oh what encouragement it is to have God on your side.

Friends are great encouragers and results are encouraging but when God comes to you and promises his presence, protection, and power, you have every reason to keep on going forward.

Thank God for the Partnership of Friends who stand with you. Thank God for Positive Results that give you hope. And thank God for his promises of presence, protection and power that keeps us moving forward for him.