

*Walking Wisely in a Dark World: 5 Relevant Truths from Corinth* Debbie McDaniel

*Divisions within the church. Disagreements about how to worship. Questions about marriage. Sexual temptations. Compromise with society's views.*

*These issues date back years to the church of Corinth where Paul had spent at least 18 months after establishing a church there, serving and teaching the people while on his second missionary journey. Corinth was a major cosmopolitan city, an important commercial trade center by the sea. And it had a strong reputation, for rampant sexual immorality and loose living. So interesting that this church of old was having many of the very same troubles we face today. This problem remains in our world, and always will - true believers don't seem to fit well within the opinions of our culture.*

*And yet, we might try so hard to "fit in." We don't want to look different. We don't want to be accused of being judgmental or unloving. We want to be "relevant" for today and stay with the times, right?*

*But God says we are different. Because of Him. He's changed us, from the inside, made us new, we're not supposed to be the same as the world.*

*Here's a few things that Paul says to the church of Corinth, which seems to be a timely word for our day. God had given him a very fruitful time of ministry while there and many people had come to know Christ. When Paul left the city and traveled to Ephesus, he later received word of trouble the Christians in Corinth were having. It was from there that he wrote several letters of encouragement.*

*In 1 Corinthians 16, we read God's instructions, penned by Paul, on - How to walk wisely, within the church, and among unbelievers, 5 things:*

*"Be on your guard, stand firm in the faith, be men of courage, be strong. Do everything in love." 1 Corinthians 16:13-14*

*1. Be on your guard - The truth is, if we're not living aware, we will be taken advantage of, we will be taken off guard, possibly deceived, tricked, or thrown for a loop. The enemy wants nothing more than for us to be asleep in our faith. Let's stay spiritually awake and aware of what surrounds us. God gives us discernment for a reason.*

*2. Stand firm in the faith - This means to "persist." Keep standing on, remembering, the Truth of what we have believed, the Truth of what has set us free. We can't live a watered-down gospel for a world that insists we tone it down a bit. We do not have to waver in our beliefs out of a longing to be accepted from the world.*

*3. Be men of courage - Be people of courage and strength. Our world needs men who are willing to walk courageously. We need women who are willing to be brave. Nothing has affected me so much in recent days as the 21 kneeling men who lost their lives on a beach at the hands of evil. These will always be remembered as men of true courage. May our lives be so brave in a dark world.*

*4. Be strong - The word used here means "to keep increasing in strength." Not in our strength, but in the power of the Spirit of God. He makes our footsteps firm, He makes our way strong.*

*5. Do everything in love - That pretty much sums it all up. Our calling. Our purpose in this life. Everything we do, all that we say, should be done in love. Pointing others to Him. Love God. Love others. It's the very love of Christ that compels us, may we walk in a manner worthy of His calling.*

*We will never be able to agree on everything with everyone, we're not supposed to, and that's not the*

*goal. We should never long to look just like the world, out of the fear that we look too different than those around us. We should not be persuaded to live in shades of gray because we don't want to step on any toes. We're here to be salt. We're here to be light. We're here to make a difference, to point others to Christ. And we can be all that God calls us to be - staying strong, standing firm, living aware, walking in love, being people of courage - for this is what matters most anyway.*

*Grace*