

An Example to Follow

Acts 20:17-31 ▪ February 5, 2023 ▪ Brad Manley

Paul had deep _____ with people.

Paul had deep _____ to God.

Paul had deep _____ for the church.

Acts 20:17-31

¹⁷ Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. ¹⁸ And when they came to him, he said to them:

"You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, ²¹ testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²² And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. ²⁴ But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵ And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, ²⁷ for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. ²⁸ Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears." (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: What's something you admire or appreciate about the Apostle Paul?

Read: Acts 20:17-31

1. Where in this passage do you see evidence of Paul's deep emotional commitment to these elders? Given what you know about Paul, are you surprised by this, or would you have expected this? Explain. What impact do you think his attitude may have had on people to whom he ministered? How have you seen God produce fruitfulness through your authentic connection with other people?
2. Twice Paul says he "did not shrink back from declaring" God's truth to the Ephesian church (vv. 20, 27). Why might it have taken courage to do that in Ephesus? As you look at what Paul devoted himself to in verses 19-21, how does his example serve to motivate possible changes in your lifestyle?
3. Looking at verses 22-24, how would you describe the nature of Paul's relationship with God? How did he view his own life? What reasons might we have to view our lives in the same way? What would be some practical implications of adopting such a view?
4. Paul knows he may not see these believers again, but he is content in knowing he "did not shrink from declaring to [them] the whole counsel of God" (v. 27). What might have Paul considered the "whole counsel of God." How might we be this intentional in our relationships?
5. Paul warns these church leaders regarding dangers the church will face (vv. 28-31). Is this warning applicable to today's church? What other kinds of warnings might be needed today?
6. How would you characterize the responsibilities of an elder according to Paul's words in verses 28-30? What are some of the ways this happens in the church today? How do you think the accessibility of information online has affected this aspect of an elder's role? How might the church assist their elders in the endeavor that Paul describes in these verses?

Apply: How are you personally challenged or encouraged by Paul's final words to these church leaders in Ephesus? What difference will that make in your life this week?

Pray: Ask God to empower us to live lives that are devoted to testifying "to the Gospel of the grace of God."