Acts: Paul with the Ephesian Elders
[Acts 20](#)

As Paul bids farewell to the elders at Ephesus, he both charges them to continue the work of spreading the gospel and entrusts them with shepherding the believers at Ephesus. As leaders in the church, they carry weight and endure hardship to advance God's kingdom. We in turn must be willing to come under the authority of the church and pour our lives out for those around us.

Application

1. Consider the idea of spiritual authority. Who in your life has spiritual authority over you? Can you think of a time when you submitted to spiritual authority even when you wanted to make a different choice?

2. Our lives are not the important thing—they are platforms for the greater cause of God's kingdom. What people or causes most deplete your energy and resources? How do you need to channel your resources so that you are depleting them for God's people?

3. Paul lived in such a way that the only thing that made sense of his life was heaven. How can you sacrifice for others and carry weight for God's purposes so that the trajectory of your life points towards heaven?

Key Points

- Paul and the Ephesian elders have reoriented their lives around a cause that is different and greater than themselves—spreading the gospel.
- Suffering is integral to ministry. If you are going to serve God's people, there will be hardship. However, God uses our sacrifices to build the church and care for his people.
- Truth is more important than fellowship. As believers, we are responsible to speak God's truth to those around us.
- Elders and pastors in particular must guard themselves against corruption, pride, and the craving of prominence.
- The authority of the church is vital to our spiritual well being. Believers must be willing to come under that authority as its intent is to guard their souls.
- To lead others well is to pour out your life, making yourself vulnerable. This puts you in a position where only God can fill you.

Other Scripture References

Hebrews 13
1 Timothy
Titus