

1 Corinthians 4:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons
I warn you.

Analysis

I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

The verb *entrepō* (έντρέπω, "to shame/humiliate") clarifies Paul's intent—not public humiliation but paternal correction. *Nouthetōn* (νουθετῶν, "warning/admonishing") combines *nous* (mind) and *tithēmi* (to place)—literally "placing in mind," confronting with truth for behavioral change. The term appears in contexts of disciplinary love (Rom 15:14; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:12, 14; 2 Thess 3:15).

As my beloved sons (hōs tekna mou agapēta, ώς τέκνα μου ἀγαπητά) establishes the relationship grounding correction. *Agapēta* ("beloved") is an affectionate term Paul uses for those dearest to him (Phil 2:12; 4:1). His harsh irony (vv. 8-13) flows from pastoral love, not vindictiveness. Like a father disciplining wayward children, Paul's goal is restoration, not retribution. This paternal metaphor (developed in v. 15) contrasts with the Corinthians' multiple "instructors" (pedagogues), positioning Paul uniquely as spiritual father.

Historical Context

In Greco-Roman households, the *paterfamilias* wielded authority but also responsibility for children's moral formation. Fathers balanced discipline with affection, correction with encouragement. Paul adopts this framework for apostolic ministry—he founded the Corinthian church (Acts 18:1-18), making him their spiritual progenitor. This familial intimacy distinguishes his relationship from later teachers who merely instructed an already-established community.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How do you receive correction from spiritual leaders—with defensiveness and resentment, or with trust that it comes from fatherly love?
2. When you must confront fellow believers, do you lead with judgment or with the kind of affectionate concern Paul models here?
3. Who are your spiritual 'children'—those you've led to Christ or discipled—and how faithfully are you exercising loving correction when needed?

Interlinear Text

Oὐκ	ἐντρέπων	ὑμᾶς	γράφω	ταῦτα	ἀλλ'	ώς	τέκνα
not	to shame	you	I write	these things	but	as	sons
G3756	G1788	G5209	G1125	G5023	G235	G5613	G5043

μου ἀγαπητὰ νουθετῶ

my	beloved	I warn
G3450	G27	G3560

Additional Cross-References

1 Thessalonians 2:11 (Parallel theme): As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

1 Corinthians 9:15 (Parallel theme): But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.

1 Corinthians 4:15 (Parallel theme): For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

3 John 1:4 (Parallel theme): I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Colossians 1:28 (Parallel theme): Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

2 Corinthians 12:19 (Love): Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

1 Thessalonians 5:14 (Parallel theme): Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.