

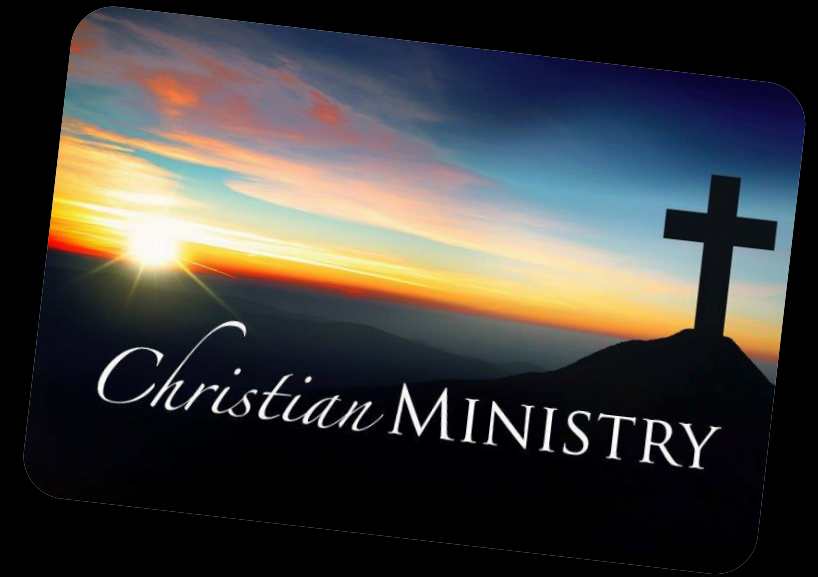
1ST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

Christian Answers to Real Life

MINISTERS AND THEIR ROLE

In helping the church of Corinth overcome internal problems, the first issue Paul addressed was the potential division of the church over misguided allegiances to different ministers.

In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul teaches the church how to think of ministers and of themselves.



FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY

Ephesians 4:11-13 (CEV)

¹¹ Christ chose some of us to be **apostles, prophets, missionaries** [evangelists], **pastors**, and **teachers**, ¹² so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. ¹³ This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him.



MINISTERS ARE SERVANTS OF GOD

1 Corinthians 4:1 (CEV)

¹ Think of us as servants of Christ who have been given the work of explaining God's mysterious ways.

Heart of a Servant

Give me the heart of a servant,
Tender and faithful and true.
Fill me with love, then use me, O Lord,
So that the world can see You.

BK@H

ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

1 Corinthians 4:2-5

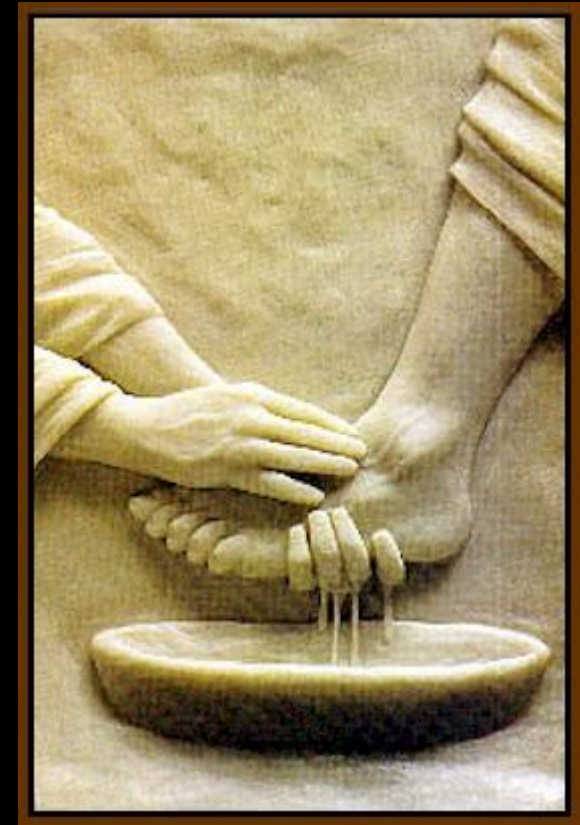
² And since our first duty is to be faithful to the one we work for, ³ it doesn't matter to me if I am judged by you or even by a court of law. In fact, I don't judge myself. ⁴ I don't know of anything against me, but that doesn't prove that I am right. The Lord is my judge. ⁵ So don't judge anyone until the Lord returns. He will show what is hidden in the dark and what is in everyone's heart. Then God will be the one who praises each of us.



SUSPEND JUDGMENT AND BE FAITHFUL

Paul instructs the church to suspend judgment (of others and of themselves) and wait for the return of Jesus Christ, when He will reveal what is hidden sort everyone one.

Until then, we aim at being faithful in our assignments!



MINISTERS ARE TARGETS

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 (CEV)

⁹ It seems to me that God has put us apostles in the worst possible place. We are like prisoners on their way to death. Angels and the people of this world just laugh at us. ¹⁰ Because of Christ we are thought of as fools, but Christ has made you wise. We are weak and hated, but you are powerful and respected. ¹¹ Even today we go hungry and thirsty and don't have anything to wear except rags. We are mistreated and don't have a place to live.

MINISTERS ARE TARGETS

1 Corinthians 4:9-13 (CEV)

¹² We work hard with our own hands, and when people abuse us, we wish them well. When we suffer, we are patient. ¹³ When someone curses us, we answer with kind words. Until now we are thought of as nothing more than the trash and garbage of this world.



MINISTERS ARE PARENTS

1 Corinthians 4:14-17

¹⁴ I am not writing to embarrass you. I want to help you, **just as parents help their own dear children.** ¹⁵ Ten thousand people may teach you about Christ, but **I am your only father.** **You became my children when I told you about Christ Jesus,** ¹⁶ and I want you to be like me. ¹⁷ That's why I sent Timothy to you. I love him like a son, and he is a faithful servant of the Lord. Timothy will tell you what I do to follow Christ and how it agrees with what I always teach about Christ in every church.



ATTITUDE CHECK

1 Corinthians 4:18-21

¹⁸ Some of you think I am not coming for a visit, and so you are bragging.

¹⁹ But if the Lord lets me come, I will soon be there. Then I will find out if the ones who are doing all this bragging really have any power. ²⁰ **God's**


kingdom isn't just a lot of words. It is power. ²¹ What do you want me to do when I arrive? Do you want me to be hard on you or to be kind and gentle?



An Important Reminder

Paul reminds the church that the way we behave largely determines how we may be treated.

Christians who are mature and responsible may be trusted with more. Christians who are proud and belligerent (“arrogant” in 4:18) are subject to correction.

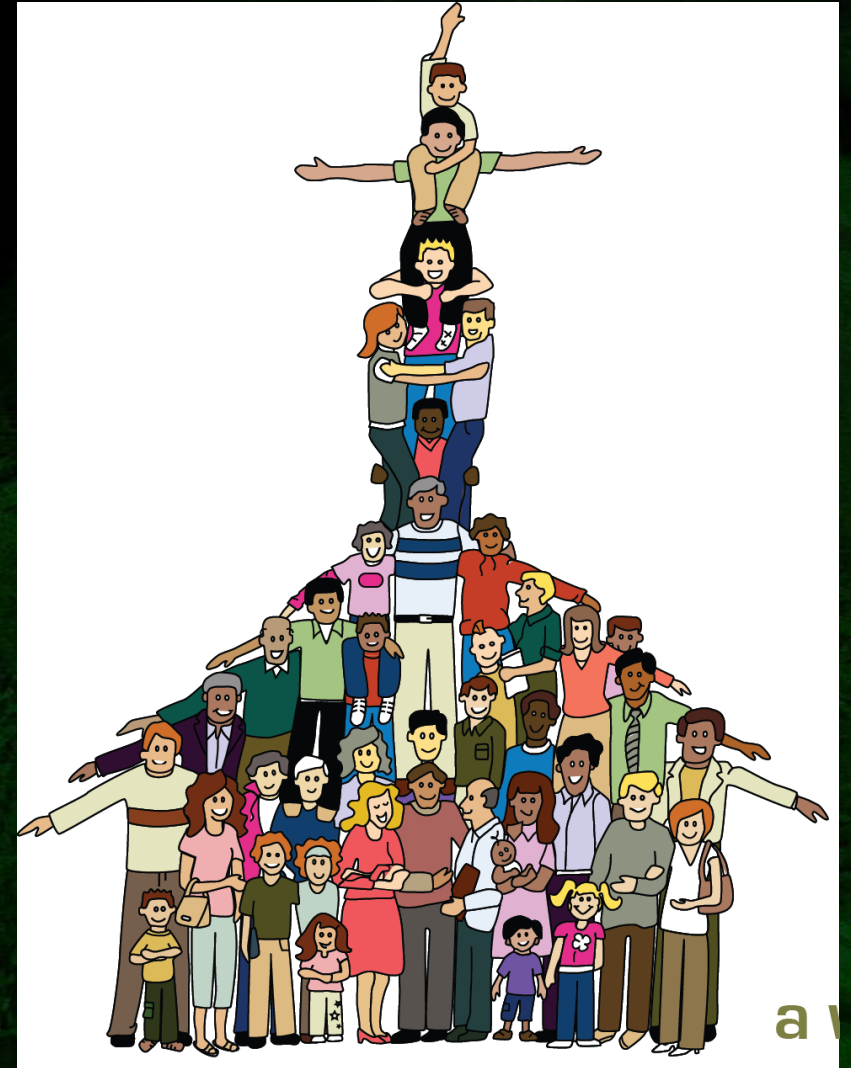


We will make
good choices
today!

The Bride of Christ

The Bible describes the church as the bride of Christ. (Rev. 21:2, 9; 2 Cor. 11:2)

Some people casually and carelessly criticize the church, forgetting that they are talking about Christ's bride.



A Healthy Church

Ephesians 4:14-16

¹⁴ We must stop acting like children. We must not let deceitful people trick us by their false teachings, which are like winds that toss us around from place to place. ¹⁵ Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ, the head ¹⁶ of the body. Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love.

TRUTH *Living*

By understanding
and respecting
our privileges and
responsibilities in the
Kingdom of God,
we can be
a healthy church!



THE LETTERS OF PAUL