

1 Corinthians

Chapter 4

4

Bible Study Meeting Information
9:00 am Wednesday, 6:45 pm Wednesday

In Person

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, 75 Pine Lakes Parkway, Palm Coast Florida 32164

Zoom

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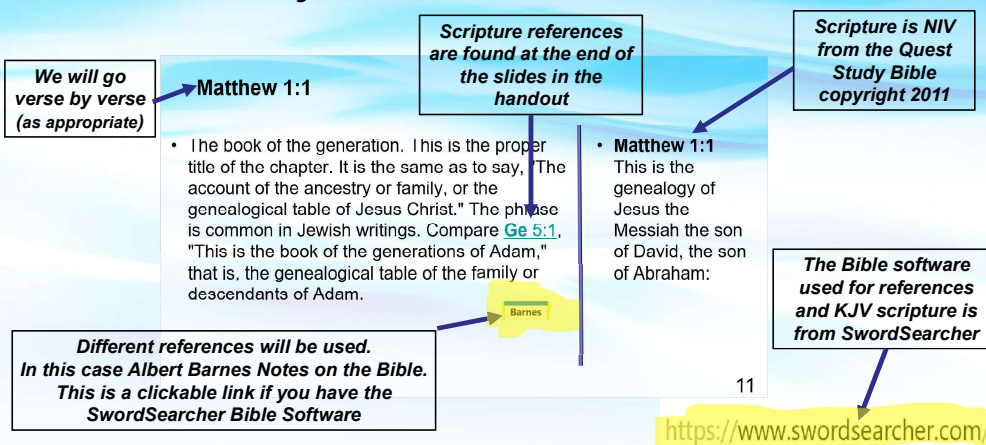
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How this study handout is structured

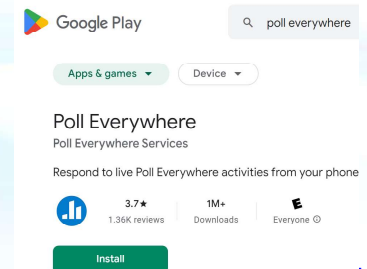


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1

1 Corinthians - Outline

I. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD. SEPARATION AND TESTIMONY. CHAPTERS 1-10

1. What Grace Has Done and the Assurance which Grace Gives. Chapter 1:1-9.
2. Contrasts. Chapter 1:10-4. ← *We are still here!*
3. Corinthian Failures. Chapters 5-6.
4. Concerning the Relationship of Man and Woman. Chapter 7.
5. Concerning Meats Offered to Idols. Liberty Governed by Love. Chapter 8.
6. Paul's Gracious Example. Chapter 9.
7. Concluding Warnings and Exhortations. Chapter 10.

5

Chapter 4 Background and Introduction

- This chapter is a continuation of the subject discussed in those which go before, and of the argument which closes the last chapter. The design of the first six verses is to show the real estimate in which the apostles ought to be held as the ministers of religion. The remainder of the chapter is occupied in setting forth further the claims of the apostles to their respect in contradistinction from the false teachers, and in reproving the spirit of vain boasting and confidence among the Corinthians.

7

1 Corinthians - Outline

II. THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST. CHAPTERS 11-14

1. The Headship of Christ and of Man. The Lords Supper. Chapter 11.
2. The Body and the Members of the Body. Chapter 12.
3. The Need and Superiority of Love. Chapter 13.
4. Prophecy and Speaking with Tongues. Chapter 14.

III. RESURRECTION AND THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH. CONCLUSIONS. CHAPTERS 15-16

1. The Doctrine of Resurrection and the Hope of the Church. Chapter 15.
2. Instruction and Greetings. Chapter 16.

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Chapter 4 Background and Introduction

1. Servants of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God. (verses 1-5)
2. Contrast Between Self-Glorification and Humiliation. (verses 6-13)
3. Admonition to Beloved Children. (verses 14-21)

8

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Servants of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God

¹This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. ²Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ³I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. ⁴My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

9

1 Corinthians 4:1

Here observe, 1. A double character given of an evangelical pastor. He is, (1.) **A minister of Christ:** that is, a person deputed by the command, and invested with the authority, of Christ, to administer in holy things, to preach the word, administer the sacraments, execute church censures; being in all things an example to the flock! and the people are to account the office and work of the ministry, as a divine institution and appointment of Christ in his church; whoever slights or opposes the ministry, flies in the face of Christ himself. →

Burkitt

11

1 Corinthians 4:1

- As if the apostle had said, "Although I warned you, in the foregoing chapter, against an undue esteem of your pastors, and against a factious preference of some before others, to the great scandal of religion, and the prejudice of the gospel; yet I speak not this to draw you off from paying that due honor and deserved respect which belongs to their character. But I desire you to account them all, neither more nor less, but **as ministers** of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." →

Burkitt

- **1 Corinthians 4:1**
This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed

10

1 Corinthians 4:1

(2.) He is a **steward of the mysteries of God**; and that in a twofold respect. First, He is a steward of the truths of God; secondly, of the ordinances of God.

Of the truths of God he is a steward, to open and explain them for the spiritual edification of all Christians, and to defend and maintain them against the opposition of all adversaries: God's steward must not suffer vermin to destroy the provision of God's household.

He is a steward of the ordinances of God also: which he is obliged to dispense in all faithfulness to his congregation. **As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. 1Pe 4:10.**

Burkitt

12

1 Corinthians 4:1

Observe, 2. As the ministers of Christ are described, they are **stewards**; so the qualification of a steward is declared, and that is faithfulness: **It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful**. What ground is there for trust, where there is no truth?

Now this faithfulness in our stewardship includes,

- (1.) Purity of intention; a pure end in all our services will give us abundance of comfort at the end of our service.
- (2.) Sincerity and integrity of heart: a faithful minister is a sincere-hearted minister, who preaches his sermons first to himself, and then to his hearers. →

Burkitt

13

1 Corinthians 4:1



15

1 Corinthians 4:1

(3.) Ministerial diligence: a slothful minister can never be a faithful steward; we must study the truths of God to exhaustion, preach them to faintness, maintain and defend them with steadfastness: we look for happiness from God as long as he is in heaven, and he expects faithfulness from us as long as we are upon earth.

(4.) Faithfulness in stewardship includes impartiality in all the administrations of Christ's house: we must take the same care of, manifest the same love unto, attend with the same diligence upon, the poorest and meanest in our congregations, as we do the rich, the great, and the honorable: for all our souls are at one price, and rated at one value in our Lord's book. Let us take care we be impartial stewards, for we must shortly give an account of our stewardship before an impartial God.

Burkitt

14

The person that wants to be a minister/pastor, or is called to be a minister/pastor, should understand that it is mostly about _____

The visibility and recognition that comes with spiritual leadership - like the upper-deck rowers (Thranites) who everyone could see and who received extra pay for their prominent position.

0%

The faithful, humble service done in obscurity - like the lower-deck rowers (Thalamites) who labored in cramped, hot, dark conditions, unable to see where the ship was going, simply following orders and trusting the captain's...

0%

The authority to steer the ship and make strategic decisions - like the helmsman (kybernetes) who stood at the stern and determined the vessel's course.

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1 Corinthians 4:2

- All servants are required to be faithful, but especially chief servants like stewards, who are entrusted with their masters' goods to dispense to others. The faithfulness of a steward in dispensing out his master's goods lies in his giving them out according to his master's order, giving to every one their portion, not detaining any thing from others which it is his master's will they should have; as Paul gloried, [Ac 20:20,27](#), that he had *kept back* from the Ephesians *nothing that was profitable* for them, nor *shunned to declare* to them *all the counsel of God*; not giving holy things to dogs, or casting pearls before swine, contrary to Christ's direction, [Mt 7:6](#).

Poole

- 1 Corinthians 4:2** Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

17

1 John 10:12

The opposite of trust

- A hired hand**; one whose great object in preaching is his own interest. **The wolf**; the enemy of God and his people.
- By *hired hands* we are to understand those who retain the pure doctrine, and who proclaim the truth, as Paul says, to serve a purpose rather than from pure zeal. Though such persons do not serve Christ faithfully, yet we ought to hear them; for Christ wished that *the Pharisees should be heard, because they sat in Moses' seat*, ([Mt 23:2](#);) and, in like manner, we ought to give such honor to the Gospel, as not to shrink from its ministers, though they be not good men.

FBN

Calvin

- 1 John 10:12** The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it.

19

1 Corinthians 4:2

- This passage, however, applies not merely against wicked teachers, but also against all that have any other object in view than the glory of Christ and the edification of the Church. For every one that teaches the truth is not necessarily faithful, but, only he who desires from the heart to serve the Lord and advance Christ's kingdom. Nor is it without good reason that Augustine assigns to *hired hands*, ([Joh 10:12](#);) a middle place between the *wolves* and the good teachers.
- Let's look at [Joh 10:12](#)

18

This commentary from Calvin suggests we should honor the Gospel by listening to teachers and ministers who teach truth, even if they lack pure motives or are "not good men." How does this interpretation make you feel about imperfect church leadership?

Uncomfortable—it seems to excuse poor ministerial behavior

0%

Reassured—the Gospel's truth doesn't depend on the messenger's perfection

0%

Confused—it's unclear where to draw the line between tolerating flaws and accepting harm

0%

Concerned—this could enable manipulation or abuse by unworthy leaders

0%

1 Corinthians 4:3

- The essential matter with Paul was, not that the Corinthians should judge him a faithful steward, or that he should be faithful in his own judgment, but that the Lord shall count him faithful. Of course, with factions at Corinth, some criticized Paul.

PNTC

- 1 Corinthians 4:3** I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

21

1 Corinthians 4:5

- Our apostle's design in these words, is not to condemn all judgment of persons, words, or actions, or to oblige us to suspend our judging till the day of judgment; but only forbids rash censuring, unadvised, uncertain, and unseasonable judging of the hearts and final states of men. We may judge what appeared, but not what is hidden and unseen: for the judging of hidden things is referred to him from whom nothing is hidden. →

Burkitt

- 1 Corinthians 4:5** Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God. 23

1 Corinthians 4:4

- My conscience is clear** - therefore conscience is not an infallible guide. Paul did not consider his so. He had a good conscience ([2Co 1:12](#)); but God might see unfaithfulness in him which his own conscience could not yet accurately detect. Much of his labor might prove "stubble" in the testing day. "Justified" here refers to sanctifying righteousness. Of his justification he has no doubt ([Ro 5:1](#)); but of the degree of his sanctifying righteousness, he cannot be infallibly sure until the judgment day, when he will gain or lose reward accordingly ([1Co 3:14-15](#)).

JFBu

- 1 Corinthians 4:4** My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.

22

1 Corinthians 4:5

- Observe farther, The person spoken of, who **makes manifest the counsels of the heart, and brings to light the hidden things of darkness:** it is Jesus Christ. **Judge nothing till the Lord come,** the Lord Jesus Christ. ,...
- Observe lastly, What will be the issue and consequence of our Lord's knowing and judging the secrets of men: **Then shall every one have praise of God;** that is, every one shall have praise that is praiseworthy; every good man, though now dispraised and despised, though censured and condemned, though loaded with scandals and false reports, yet then every righteous man shall have praise from Christ the righteous Judge.

Burkitt

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1 Corinthians 4:5

- How very hard it is not to judge! That critical faculty is born in us; it is natural for us to bring all things we hear or see before the bar of our human judgment. God has given us this faculty, and we cannot help using it. It cannot be altogether wrong for us to use it.
- **I. There is a grave danger in the exercise of this faculty,** a danger lest we should abuse this power, to set ourselves up as teachers, as if the right of delivering judgment had been committed to us. There is a danger lest we should judge harshly and uncharitably, to the hurt and detriment of others; from imperfect knowledge presuming to condemn the actions and motives of our neighbors: and it is against this sort of abuse that St. Paul warns us. →

Nisbet

25

1 Corinthians 4:5

- **II. The best self-knowledge does not enable us to fulfil the functions of the perfect judge.**—Our knowledge is only partial and limited when we regard others and their circumstances. Judgment is God's prerogative—not man's. 'Judgment is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' 'The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son.' 'Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.' It is worth while to notice that those who deal harshly must expect to be dealt harshly with themselves, while the merciful shall be dealt leniently with. Let us be patient with the faults and failings of those round about us; let us remember that we are shielded perhaps by the nature of our work and calling from many temptations which prove too strong for our fellow-men.

Nisbet

27

1 Corinthians 4:5

It is not without a cause that this warning is given, for we know what an amount of harm it does in our days; how strongly people resent it, what an amount of unhappiness it causes, how wide of the marks our judgments often are! Very often those who are the most severe judges of their fellow-men are blind to their own faults, ignorant of the fact that what they condemn in others is the very thing of which they are themselves most guilty. They show an astonishing lack of self-knowledge, which would have enabled them to show greater charity and generosity. Those who have the deepest knowledge of themselves are the most humble and pitiful and merciful in their judgment? →

Nisbet

26

1 Corinthians 4:5

Let us be not so ready to find fault as some are, and more ready to give praise; and if we have to give blame in the course of our duty, let us do it as kindly as we can, considering ourselves, our many weaknesses, our faults and sins.

- **III. God hath appointed a day when He will judge the world.**—Nothing escapes God's notice. A day of justice and judgment is drawing near. We forget in our impatience that with God one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack, as St. Paul reminds us, concerning His promise. It is a needed warning, a reminder that we must have patience. →

Nisbet

28

1 Corinthians 4:5

After all, God's inexhaustible patience and self-restraint are the very strongest proof of His majesty and power, for where there is boundless might, it is there you will find immovable calm and the infinite patience of conscious strength. God's plans are worked out in some such way as this, with infinite patience, with dignity, and with power.

1 Corinthians 4:5

- *The Key Distinction:* We judge (discern) actions, teachings, and fruit—things that are visible and measurable against Scripture. We leave to God the judgment of hearts, motives, and eternal destinies—things that are hidden and known only to Him.
- Discernment
 - False teaching and doctrine
 - Right from wrong behavior
 - Wise choices and relationships
 - Spiritual maturity for leadership



Discussion: "Paul warns against judging before the Lord comes. What are some examples of judgments we might make about people or situations that we should leave to God? How can we balance this with the biblical command to exercise discernment?"

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 4:6-13

Contrast Between Self-Glorification and Humiliation

⁶Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. ⁷For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? ⁸Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you! →

Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 4:6-13

Contrast Between Self-Glorification and Humiliation

⁹For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! ¹¹To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. ¹²We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; ¹³when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

33

1 Corinthians 4:7

- Learn that ministers of great abilities, eminent for gifts and graces, are in great danger of being puffed up themselves, and their people also too prone to glory in them. There is a temptation in good things, in the best things, to pride; the best men on earth may be overheated by what they have received from heaven; and Satan may take occasion to puff us up with spiritual pride; Paul puts forth this soul-humbling and pride-mortifying expostulation, **What do you have that you did not receive?** There is nothing wherein one minister, or indeed one man, differs or is distinguished from another, or where he excels another, but it is given him from God; it is God, and not himself, that makes him to differ.

Burkitt

- 1 Corinthians 4:7** For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 35

1 Corinthians 4:6

- The apostle here lets us into the reason why he had used his own name and that of Apollos in this discourse of his. He had done *it in a figure*, and *he had done it for their sakes*. He chose rather to mention his own name, and the name of a faithful fellow-laborer, than the names of any heads of factions among them, that he might avoid what would provoke, and make his advice stronger. Note, Ministers should use prudence in their advices and warnings, but especially in their reproofs,...
- 1 Corinthians 4:6** Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other. 34

MHWBC

1 Corinthians 4:8

- Already you have all you want!, That is, in their own opinion: these words, and some following expressions, are an ironical concession. They were not full of God, and divine things; nor of Christ, and of grace out of his fulness; nor of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, as Stephen and Barnabas are said to be; nor of joy and peace in believing; nor of goodness and spiritual knowledge; but they were full of themselves, and were pulled up in their fleshly minds with an opinion of their abilities, learning, oratory, and eloquence, of their ministers, →
- 1 Corinthians 4:8** Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you! 36

Gill

1 Corinthians 4:8

and of their own great improvements in knowledge under their ministrations. They fancied they had got to a perfection in knowledge and were brimful of it; and as the full stomach, from which the metaphor is taken, loathes the honeycomb, so these persons loathed the apostle's ministry, and the pure preaching of the Gospel; imagining that they had attained to something above it, and stood in no need of it; when, alas! they were but babes, children in understanding, and needed milk instead of strong meat; so far were they from being what they thought themselves to be.

Gill

37

1 Corinthians 4:9

- Besides, men and angels are offsprings of the same Father, participators of the same nature, subjects of the same moral government. No wonder they are so concerned.
- **II THAT OUR PART SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PLAYED.** How doubly careful are our actors on the stage, in the presence of spectators distinguished for the highest genius, education, and artistic culture! It behooves every man to be cautious how he acts in the presence of his fellow creatures, whether they are children or adults, common people or princes; but how much more cautious should he be—when he knows that angels, whose pure natures loathe sin in all its forms, have their keenest gaze fastened ever on his life.

Pulpit

39

1 Corinthians 4:9

- *Man an object of angelic observation:* Angels as spectators are *intelligent, interested, numerous, constant*. If the eyes of such intelligences are constantly upon us, what are the practical conclusions?
- **I THAT OUR CONDUCT HERE CONCERNS THE UNIVERSE.** No man lives unto himself; each unit is a link in being's endless chain. His actions must tell harmfully or beneficently on the creation; hence all loving and loyal intelligences direct, their attention to him with deep and unabating interest. →

Pulpit

38

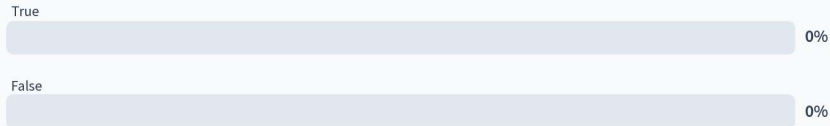
1 Corinthians 4:9

- **III THAT THERE IS NO CHANCE OF CONCEALING OUR SIN.** The attempt to cloak or dissemble our sins is absurdly futile. While there is One who reads the heart, there may be millions who mark all our overt acts, whether produced in darkness or in light.
- **IV THAT WE MAY EXPECT HELP IN ALL HOLY ENDEAVOURS.** Those celestial spirits are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.
- They have received a Divine commission to bear us up, lest we dash our feet against a stone. In all ages they have rendered assistance to the good.

Pulpit

40

True or False: Angels are created spiritual beings who worship God, deliver messages, protect believers, and engage in spiritual warfare on behalf of God's purposes.



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1 Corinthians 4:10

- **We are fools**; accounted fools by those who boast of their wisdom. **For Christ's sake**; because we devote ourselves faithfully to the work of preaching Christ crucified, and seek only his honor. **Ye are wise in Christ**; in your own esteem. It is not safe to judge of character by outward condition or by the opinion which persons form of themselves. They may imagine that they are spiritually rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing, when in fact they are poor, and in want of all things. [Re 3:17](#).
- **1 Corinthians 4:10**
We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored!

FBN

43

Scripture evidence for Angels

- **Hebrews 1:14 (KJV)** Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?
- **Psalms 91:11-12 (KJV)** For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in *their* hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.
- **Matthew 18:10 (KJV)** Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.
- **Revelation 5:11-12 (KJV)** And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

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"How comfortable are you with the idea that faithful Christian service might lead to hardship?"



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1 Corinthians 4:11

- All through our ministry we suffer want for the needs of life, are often in want of food and drink and clothing, are beaten (buffeted), and, like the Master, have no certain home. PNTC
- Lord! to see such a man as St. Paul going up and down the world with a naked back and empty belly, without a house of settled abode to hide his head in; one that did more service for God in his day, than perhaps we have done him all our days: can we, the ministers of Christ, complain of hard usage from the world, when we consider that this great apostle suffered in the world? Burkitt
- **1 Corinthians 4:11**
To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless.

45

1 Corinthians 4:13

- The apostle signifies, that no persons could be more base, vile, and contemptible than they were, nothing more despised, or in less esteem: he did not say this as complaining, or in any discontent at what he saw was the will of God concerning them; but to show them the difference between the apostles, and them and their teachers, and possibly reflecting upon them, as being in some degree guilty of this scorn and contempt of them, or at least, more than they ought, neglecting them under these mean and afflictive circumstances. Poole
- **1 Corinthians 4:13**
when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

47

1 Corinthians 4:12

- While at Ephesus, whence this letter was written, the Apostle supported himself by working with Aquila and Priscilla at tent-making. This labour was no recreation or pastime with St. Paul, it was hard and earnest work. (See [1Th 2:8-9](#); [2Th 3:8](#).) That this labor was rendered more excessive from the Apostle's characteristic generosity to others, we may conclude from the expression used in his farewell to the Ephesian elders ([Ac 20:17-38](#)), "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Ellicott
- **1 Corinthians 4:12**
We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;

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Contextual Reading 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

Servants of Christ and Stewards of the Mysteries of God

- ¹⁴I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children. ¹⁵Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶Therefore I urge you to imitate me. ¹⁷For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. ¹⁸Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. ²⁰For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

48

1 Corinthians 4:14

- Truly they needed that plain admonition to save them from the pride which was discovered cropping. God help us all to profit by these admonitions and remember our place is down on the Lord's bottom; while there we never can fall, as there is no place to fall. Humility is the primary and most important Christian attribute, the antithesis of pride, the most dangerous enemy.

Godbey

- **1 Corinthians 4:14**
I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as my dear children.

49

1 Corinthians 4:16

- We have here the special advice he urges on them: *Wherefore I beseech you be you followers of me, 1Co 4:16.* This he elsewhere explains and limits (**1Co 11:1**): "*Be you followers of me, as I also am of Christ.* Follow me as far as I follow Christ. Come up as close as you can to my example in those instances wherein I endeavor to copy after his pattern. Be my disciples, as far as I manifest myself to be a faithful minister and disciple of Christ, and no further. I would not have you be my disciples, but his. But I hope I have approved myself a faithful steward of the mysteries of Christ, →

MHWBC

- **1 Corinthians 4:16**
Therefore I urge you to imitate me.

51

1 Corinthians 4:15

- The great lesson of this text is: That people ought to have a tender respect for those ministers whom God hath honored with their first conversion and bringing them home to Christ. God may make use of a multitude of ministers to instruct Christians, and carry on his work in their souls to perfection; but he maketh use of some particular minister at first to convince them, and be an instrument in the changing of their hearts; such they ought to have a great value for, they are their spiritual *fathers* in a proper sense.

Poole

- **1 Corinthians 4:15**
Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

50

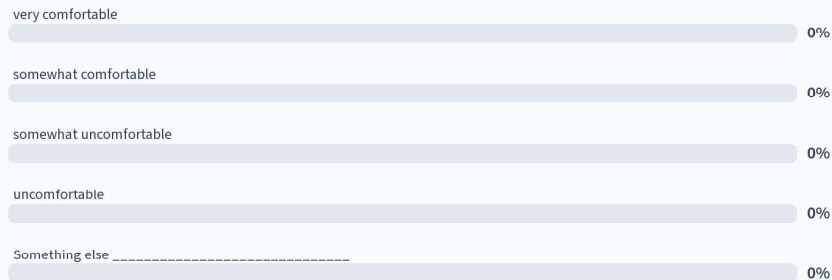
1 Corinthians 4:16

and a faithful servant of my master Christ; so far follow me, and tread in my steps." Note, Ministers should so live that their people may take pattern from them, and live after their copy. They should guide them by their lives as well as their lips, go before them in the way to heaven, and not content themselves with pointing it out. Note, As ministers are to set a pattern, others must take it. They should follow them as far as they are satisfied that they follow Christ in faith and practice.

MHWBC

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Paul said, Therefore I urge you to imitate me. I would be _____ to say this to younger Christians.



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1 Corinthians 4:18

- I hear that some of your teachers, and some of your members, are so conceited of themselves, that they would persuade you that I dare not see their faces, or come to discourse with them face to face, and therefore *would not come unto you*. Pool
- During Paul's long absence in Asia, some of the preachers from Judea (doubtless sincerely, who were eye-witnesses to the fact that he was not with Christ during His ministry), unfortunately had impeached his apostolical authority. →
- **1 Corinthians 4:18** Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.

Godbey

55

1 Corinthians 4:17

- Where observe, That St. Paul had led so holy and unblameable a conversation in every place where he had lived, that he is neither afraid nor ashamed that his course of life should be discovered and made known to all the world. A great example for our imitation, to walk before God and our people with such care and caution, with such heedfulness and circumspection, that we need not blush, when either our doctrine or practice are published before all the churches of Jesus Christ. Timothy shall acquaint you with my ways, and with what I teach everywhere in every church. Burkitt
- **1 Corinthians 4:17** For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church. 54

1 Corinthians 4:18

- How natural for those who had been with Jesus from the baptism of John to say, "Well, Brother Paul is a good preacher, but no apostle, for I was with Jesus when He called the twelve, and Paul was not in the country, and never came into Judea till after Pentecost. So of course he is no apostle." The same preachers pointed them to Peter, who also had been there, and commended him as a genuine apostle; not only one of the original twelve, but the senior, honored with the first gospel sermon on the day of Pentecost. This had damaged Paul's influence among them for good. Godbey

56

1 Corinthians 4:19

- *And I will know not the speech* By *speech* you must understand that chattering in which the false apostles delighted themselves, for they excelled in a kind of dexterity and gracefulness of speech, while they were destitute of the zeal and efficacy of the Spirit. By the term *power*, he means that spiritual efficacy, with which those are endowed who dispense the word of the Lord with earnestness. The meaning, therefore, is: "I shall see whether they have so much occasion for being puffed up; and I shall not judge of them by their mere outward talkativeness, →
- **1 Corinthians 4:19** But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have

Calvin

57

1 Corinthians 4:20

- *The kingdom of God* in the church, or *the kingdom of God* in the particular soul. God has not sent his ministers to subdue souls to himself by fine, showy words and phrases, but by a lively preaching the gospel, while his power attends their plain preaching; **and the power and efficacy of the preachers' doctrine appears in their holy life and conversation, so as their people cannot say to them: *Physician, heal thyself*, So the kingdom of God in particular souls does not appear in words, but in the power which the word of God has upon men's hearts, in subduing their lusts and corruptions, and bringing their hearts into a subjection to his will.**
- **1 Corinthians 4:20** For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

Poole

59

1 Corinthians 4:19

in which they place the sum-total of their glory, and on the ground of which they claim for themselves every honor. If they wish to have any honor from me, they must bring forward that *power* which distinguishes the true servants of Christ from the merely pretended: otherwise, I shall despise them, with all their show. It is to no purpose, therefore, that they confide in their eloquence, for I shall reckon it nothing better than smoke."

58

1 Corinthians 4:21

- As if the apostle had said, "Come I will among you, to regulate disorders, and to rectify abuses: now choose how I shall come; whether in the milder way of kindness, love, and meekness towards you, or exercising the power God has given me, of inflicting corporal punishments on offenders, by delivering them to Satan as God's executioner upon their bodies."
- Note here, 1. A power, which the apostle intimates himself to have in the Christian church; namely, the power of the rod, that is, a power of inflicting the severest of corporal punishments, even death itself, upon notorious offenders. →
- **1 Corinthians 4:21** What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

Burkitt

60

1 Corinthians 4:21

- Thus Elymas the sorcerer was smitten with blindness by St. Paul, [Ac 13:8-11](#).
- Ananias and Sapphira struck dead by St. Peter, [Ac 5:1-10](#).
- Hymenaeus and Philetus delivered unto Satan, [1Ti 1:20](#).
- It was usual with God, in the earlier days of the gospel, to give Satan leave to seize the bodies of such as were, for their obstinate perseverance in sin, cut off from the communion of the church; who plagued them with diseases, and sometimes with death, which is called **the destruction of the flesh**, [1Co 5:5](#).

Burkitt

61

Reference Scriptures

- **Acts 13:8-11 (KJV)** But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, *thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.
- **1 Corinthians 3:14-15 (KJV)** If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

63

"What is one specific way you plan to apply what you've learned from 1 Corinthians 4?"

Cultivate greater humility about my spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 4:7)	0%
Be more faithful in how I steward what God has given me (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)	0%
Reserve judgment and leave more to God (1 Corinthians 4:5)	0%
Follow godly examples more intentionally (1 Corinthians 4:16)	0%
Embrace suffering for Christ as normal, not exceptional (1 Corinthians 4:11-13)	0%
Examine whether my Christian life has real power or just good talk (1 Corinthians 4:20)	0%
Something else _____	0%

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Reference Scriptures

- **1 Corinthians 5:5 (KJV)** To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
- **1 Corinthians 11:1 (KJV)** Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.
- **2 Corinthians 1:12 (KJV)** For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. **Matthew 23:2 (KJV)** Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:
- **Revelation 3:17 (KJV)** Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

64

Reference Scriptures

- **Romans 5:1 (KJV)** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:
- **1 Thessalonians 2:8-9 (KJV)** So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:8 (KJV)** Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you:
- **1 Timothy 1:20 (KJV)** Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.