

# 1 Corinthians 4 Commentary

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1 CORINTHIANS - PROBLEMS OF A LOCAL CHURCH

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

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**FROM CHART: Note 2 major divisions:**

- **FIRST DIVISION** - Chapters 1-6 = Problems of Congregation - Divisions & Depravities,
- **SECOND DIVISION** - Chapters 7-16 = Personal Problems, Worship Problems

**Paul Apple's Summary DIVISIONS IN THE CHURCH -- EXALT GOD RATHER THAN MAN**

(1 Cor 1:18 - 2:16) The effective communication of the wisdom of God by powerfully preaching the crucified Christ = Exalting God rather than Man

(1 Cor 1:18-25) Wisdom of God: The word of the cross is true power and wisdom --

Only the message of Christ crucified impacts man with the power and wisdom of God

(1 Cor 1:26-31) Nullifying man's pride: Divine election leaves no room for man's pride --

The divine initiative in election nullifies man's pride so that God gets all the credit

(1 Cor 2:1-5) Powerfully preaching Christ --

The effectiveness of preaching derives from its focus on the crucified Christ and its dynamic of the power of God rather than from the eloquence or personality or popularity of the particular preacher

(1 Cor 2:6-8) The mystery aspect of the wisdom of God --

The message of the cross is only foolishness to those who don't understand the coming glory

(1 Cor 2:9-16) Spirit taught truth -- Spirit reveals . . . Spirit inspires . . . Spirit illumines --

The Holy Spirit directs the communication and understanding of divine wisdom through three fundamental processes

(1 Cor 2:17 - 4:5) Ego-less construction of the church of God by following the blueprint of the wise master builder = Exalting God rather than Man

(1 Cor 3:1-4) The danger of sectarianism --

Fleshly sectarianism is an unnatural state for the believer and stunts spiritual growth

(1 Cor 3:5-9) Sectarianism defeated by giving all glory to God --

All of the accolades for spiritual ministry should go to God who causes the growth -- not to the particular servants laboring together on God's behalf

(1 Cor 3:10-15) Divine blueprint for spiritual construction --

The hard work of spiritual ministry can reap eternal rewards when we build wisely on the proper foundation

(1 Cor 3:16-17) The sanctity of the local church as the temple of God --

Because the local church is God's holy sanctuary, anyone who damages (destroys / corrupts) it will be punished accordingly

(1 Cor 3:18-23) God's wisdom always trumps man's wisdom --

Two foolish mistakes that undermine God's wisdom and cause division within the local church: - Thinking too highly of self- Thinking too highly of any prominent men (notable teachers, spiritual leaders)

(1 Cor 4:1-5) Performance review for Christian ministers --

The judgment of the Lord is all that matters when it comes to ultimate accountability for Christian ministry

(1 Cor 4:6-21) Power to Discipline those Causing Divisions in the church (4:6-13) Exposing arrogant pride and self sufficiency --

Boasting in particular prominent preachers demonstrates arrogant pride and self sufficiency

(1 Cor 4:14-21) Tough love --

Effective spiritual leadership aggressively confronts sin and provides just the right balance of nurture and discipline for the need of the moment to achieve the desired change in behavior

**1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.**

Amplified - SO THEN, let us [apostles] be looked upon as ministering servants of Christ and stewards (trustees) of the mysteries (the secret purposes) of God.

Wuest - In this manner let a man measure and classify us, as servants of Christ and as those who have been entrusted with the mysteries of God and their disposition. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 4:1 One should think about us this way-- as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:1 So look at Apollos and me as mere servants of Christ who have been put in charge of explaining God's mysteries.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:1 This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:1 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:1 Ο τως μ ς λογιζ σθω νθρωπος ς πηρ τας Χριστο κα ο κον μους μυστηρ ων θεο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries

of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so reckon us as officers of Christ, and stewards of the secrets of God,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:1 A person should consider us in this way: as servants of Christ and managers of God's mysteries.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:1 Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:1 Thus should one regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:1 People should think of us as Christ's servants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:1 People should think of us as servants of Christ and managers who are entrusted with God's mysteries.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:1 Let us be judged as servants of Christ, and as those who are responsible for the secret things of God.

- **Let a man regard us:** 1Co 4:13 2Co 12:6
- **as servants:** 1Co 3:5 9:16-18 Mt 24:45 2Co 4:5 6:4 11:23 Col 1:25 1Ti 3:6
- **and stewards:** Lu 12:42 16:1-3 Tit 1:7 1Pe 4:10
- **mysteries of God.:** 1Co 2:7 Mt 13:11 Mk 4:11 Lu 8:10 Ro 16:25 Eph 1:9 3:3-9 6:19 Col 1:26,27 2:2 4:3 1Ti 3:9,16

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 2:7+ but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory;



HUPERETES - UNDER ROWERS ON ROMAN WARSHIP  
Click to Enlarge



HUPERETES - UNDER ROWERS ON GALLEY SHIP  
Click to Enlarge

## PROPER PERSPECTIVE REGARDING SPIRITUAL LEADERS

**What is the context?** Paul had just alluded to "Paul or Apollos or Cephas" in 1 Cor 3:22. The saints at Corinth had [placed their spiritual leaders on a pedestal](#) and had broken into factions following their "favorite" leader (like little children [aka "fleshy men"] playing "[Follow the Leader](#)"). This begs the question beloved, where is your focus, on your wonderful pastor or on the [Wonderful One, Jesus Christ](#)? If it is the former, then the problem is that you are more concerned about their abilities than on the leadership of Christ. All of us can potentially fall into the trap of magnifying the messenger over the Master! One could subtitle 1 Cor 4:1-5 "How to Evaluate a Minister" which is a "popular game" played by many Christians who are continually evaluating pastors and

other Christian leaders. It's not a new game. The members of the church of Corinth were experts at playing the comparison game.

**Paul Apple** has a helpful introduction - We all are used to performance reviews at work. We are used to receiving them - might not like them all that much - if we supervise people, we are also used to giving them. We have a set of criteria that we use to measure performance. Some standards might be more objective and easy to evaluate . . . others are more subjective and take into account a variety of intangible attributes. The Corinthian believers had wrongly established themselves as judges over the effectiveness of the gifted preachers in their church. This had caused them to align with particular personalities in a manner that was divisive. Paul settles the issue decisively by pointing to the ultimate accountability of the Lord when He returns to evaluate the job done by His servants. Faithfulness will be the standard. And the scope of judgment will extend to "the things hidden in the darkness" and "the motives of men's hearts." There is the prospect of great reward and praise in that day; but let no one usurp the Lord's prerogative of judging His own servants. Christians have an unhealthy bent towards being judgmental in critiquing those who are publicly ministering the Word of God by preaching and teaching. We are charged to be like the Bereans in making sure that the message is in line with the whole of Scripture. But we are not allowed to judge on the basis of motives or personality preferences. He is not saying that Christian ministers have no earthly accountability within the governance of the local church. He is not saying that we should not examine our own hearts before the Lord and correct any deficiencies brought to light by our conscience as informed by the Holy Spirit. He is addressing the issue of ultimate accountability. How will one minister stack up against another at the end of the day? Why is it wrong for Christians to take it upon themselves to try to judge the ministry work of others when they have no oversight over those ministers? How can Christian ministers become complacent and overconfident if they put too much stock in their own self-evaluation of their own ministries? The one who examines us is the Lord = the one who knows all about us - even to the motives and hidden thoughts of our hearts. When He returns, He will give out the rewards that are appropriate. ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**What the Bible Teaches** - In this chapter Paul draws to a conclusion his teaching as to the unity of the assembly, and the destructive nature of divisions. He has ruthlessly exposed sectarianism and man's wisdom, and triumphantly set forth the centrality of the Cross, and the fulness of the revelation of the things of God by the Spirit of God. He has clearly declared the seriousness of building on the one foundation, and the ultimate day of account for every believer. He will now set forth the deep responsibility of the true servant to set forth the sacred mysteries (1 Cor 4:1-5), contrast the pretension of the Corinthians with the sufferings of the apostles (1 Cor 4:6-13), and assure them that, despite all his warnings, they were his children and he their father (1 Cor 4:14-21).

**MacArthur** - First Corinthians 4:1–5 focuses on the true nature and marks of God's ministers. It sets forth the basic guidelines and standards by which ministers are to minister and be evaluated. It deals with what the congregation's attitude toward the minister should be and what the minister's attitude toward himself should be. In short, it puts the minister of God in God's perspective. Paul makes it clear that popularity, personality, degrees, and numbers play no role in the Lord's perspective—and that they should play no role in ours. The main point of the passage here still concerns the divisions over different ministers. The message is that servants of God should not be ranked at all, by others or by themselves. All who are true to Scripture in their preaching and living should be treated equally. ([MNTC-1 Cor](#))

**Utley** - Believers must evaluate or consider the status of leadership. (**NB**: Evaluate = YES, Criticize and compare = NO). For the Kingdom of God leadership is servanthood/stewardship (cf. Mark 10:42–44+). Paul's theology follows Jesus' words. ([1 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Let a man regard us in this manner** - **Regard** ([logizomai](#)) is an accounting term that brings to mind balancing books and getting things in order. While the world may rank pastors in terms of popularity and outward success, God's "balance sheet" gives us two "assets" that characterize His true messengers. The KJV picks up this sense translating it "Let a man so account of us." Let a man take inventory. **Us** in context refers to Paul, Apollos and Cephas (1 Cor 3:22+). **Man** is a general allusion to all believers, not to a specific person or persons. **Let...regard** is not a suggestion but a command in the [present imperative](#) calling for his readers to give the following truth their continued attention -- to reckon, to esteem, to consider on Paul, Apollos, Cephas, et al, understanding their appointed roles in the Body of Christ, which would serve to counter placing one man above another (factionalism leading to divisions). One writer said "This not now, nor has it ever been about us. It is about Christ." (Charles Keen) When God's men exalt themselves, they subvert the work of the Master. When God's people exalt one minister over another, they also detract from the One, Christ Jesus, Who Alone is to be exalted and followed. Paul's point is that the aspect of their service that the Corinthians should continually "reckon" was that he, Apollos and Cephas were servants of Christ, their Master.

**Glenn Spencer** - Paul is telling the Corinthians how to think of him. Paul wasn't playing the bigshot like many of the teachers in Corinth. The people had put their leaders rather than Christ on the pedestal. They missed the whole thing. The Corinthian believers were preferring one leader above the other. They were focusing on their intellect and oratory skills and bragging about them. They were magnifying the messenger over the Master. So as Paul begins this chapter, he tells the Corinthians how regard him and the other leaders. (Expository Pulpit Series – 1 Corinthians: Divine Help for a Divided Church)

**Pulpit Commentary** - Since it is inevitable that Christians should form some estimate of the position of their ministers, he proceeds to tell them what that estimate should be. Ministers are not to be unduly magnified, for their position is subordinate; they are not to be unduly depreciated, for if they are faithful they may appeal from frivolous human prejudices and careless depreciations to that only Judge and Master before whom they stand or fall

**ILLUSTRATION** - Someone asked an elderly Scotswoman what she thought of Robert Murray McCheyne's preaching. She hesitated for a moment, then replied, "He preaches as if he was a-dying to have you saved." Is that our spirit? Those who watch us will know. How appropriate was Spurgeon's advice to a young minister who complained of the smallness of his congregation: "It is as large a one as you will want to give account for in the Day of Judgment."

**Guzik** has an interesting comment - Paul had a real problem with the Corinthians; they tended to look down on him and not respect his apostolic authority. In carefully chosen words, Paul will show the Corinthians how to have a proper regard – not too exalted and not too low – of himself and the other apostles.

**Zodhiates on regard** - Paul also tells us in this verse that we (PREACHERS) are being watched by other people. They are trying to figure us out, especially if we are preachers.

**As servants of Christ** - They were merely under rowers, the lowest galley slaves rowing in the bottom of the boat. In this short description Paul emphasizes that he and Apollos and Cephas were **subordinate** to Christ and their role was to carry out His orders, even as the under rower kept his eyes on the helmsman directing the oarsmen. Paul's use of this specific word for servants is also a reflection of his humility, practicing what he preaches for believers to not think more highly of himself than he ought (Ro 12:3+). The word for **Servants** is **huperetes** and is the only use in Paul's writings. What was a **huperetes**? These were the men down in the ship's, doing one thing -- rowing and with their eyes on one man, the man standing at the front of the hull, shouting "Row, Row, Row!" Why? Because if anyone gets out of synch, the whole boat is thrown off course! And who was the captain of the ship, so to speak, of Whom were they Servants **Of Christ!** Christ is their Master. What a picture of Paul and Apollos "rowing for Jesus!" (Play the apropos song [Set Sail](#)) There are no big "I's" or little "u's" in the ministry! A God-called preacher marches to the beat of a different drummer and if he doesn't he's not worth being in the pulpit.

As an aside since Corinth was an active seaport, which frequently docked Roman war galleys (see picture above), **huperetes** was a term familiar to the Corinthians who would have immediately grasped Paul's figurative use in describing himself, Apollos and Cephas.

**Jack Arnold** adds that "Corinth was a seaport and it was a common sight to see the Roman war galleys. On the lowest level of these warships was a single row of benches on both sides of the deck where the rowers sat. Facing the rowers on a platform was where an officer (sometimes the captain) would stand so the rowers (oarsmen) could see him. It was the oarsman's task to row according to the cadence set by the officer. The whole ship moved and stopped on his orders. These rowers were slaves in the Roman navy who had been forcibly put in the position of under-rower; it was not their choice. The word huperetes implies subordination and insignificance. A minister is an under-rower who takes his orders from Jesus Christ, his Captain. What the Lord Jesus tells His servants, they are to obey, fixing their eyes on Him, their spiritual Captain, for orders. An under-rower did all the work; the captain gave the orders and got the glory. Ministers labor at the Lord's command but it is Jesus who gets the glory. While the word "servant" tells us that the minister is not the big shot, the domineering leader or the lord over the flock, it does indicate a biblical independence of ministers as far as from whom they ultimately take their marching orders. They are not ultimately servants of an elder board, a deacon board, a congregation or a denomination. They are servants of Christ. Ministers are not to be paying heed to what the congregation or any one group within the congregation wants to hear, but they are to say what the Lord tells them to say out of His inspired and infallible Bible. To harness a minister of the gospel is to rob him of being a true servant of Christ and it also robs the congregation of listening to a man preach who has been listening to God. To harness a man of God is to stifle his creativity, hamper his zeal and cool his heart for the Lord. ([1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

Note that in 1 Cor 3:5 Paul used another word for servants writing "What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one." **Servants** is **diakonos** conveys the basic idea of humble, submissive, personal service, with less emphasis on a specific office or a particular function. As Matthew Henry once said "Those whom God will employ are first struck with a sense of their unworthiness to be employed." Another writer says the idea is God's "errand boy." Paul uses the other word for slave, **doulos**, a bond servant/bondslave, of himself only once in the Corinthians letters (2 Cor 4:5 = bond-servants for Jesus' sake").

**Zodhiates** - Paul is still concerned in the 4th chapter about the factionalism in the Corinthian church. He conceives of the Christian Church as a ship, of which Christ is the Pilot, and all His ministers are *rowers* under His command. They are so subordinate to Him that they can do nothing and be nothing in their ministerial character except as He gives the word.

**THOUGHT** - Two things should characterize a preacher: the proclamation of the gospel, serving out the grace of God to others, and a voluntary submissive relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Zodhiates)

**John Trapp** on **servants of Christ** - Under-rowers serve "Christ the master-pilot, helping forward the ship of the Church toward the haven of heaven."

**Zodhiates** - it is a great and high calling to be a servant of Christ, to be called to row the ship of salvation, to be entrusted with the working of the oars that propel the vessel of which Christ is the Owner and Pilot. Not even the apostles are independent heads and leaders. They are all underworkmen, hand-laborers, dependent servants, who must look to Christ for their authority and orders in all they undertake and do. Paul feels that when others look at us they must realize we are servants, not of other men, or of an organization or church, but of Christ Himself....The servant of Christ must maintain a direct line of communication, so to speak, through prayer and obedient study of the Word of God. "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. 7:23).

**Constable** makes an excellent point - Learners should view teachers as stewards of God's mysteries rather than as party leaders....**Servants** "means an under-rower, a figure taken from the galley ships of the time. Slaves who rowed under the authority of the man who coordinated their individual efforts propelled the ship. The ship sailed straight ahead rather than in circles as the slaves followed the instructions of their leader."

**MacArthur** says a **huperetes** is "called to serve men in Christ's name; but they cannot serve men rightly unless they serve their Lord rightly. And they cannot serve Him rightly unless they see themselves rightly: as His underslaves, His menial servants." (Ibid)

**G Campbell Morgan** describes the **huperetes** as "one who acts under direction, and asks no questions, one who does the thing he is appointed to do without hesitation, and one who reports only to the One Who is over him."

Go, labor on; spend and be spent,  
Thy joy to do the Father's will;  
It is the way the Master went;  
Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labor on; 'tis not for naught;  
Thine earthly loss is heavenly gain;  
Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee not;  
The Master praises—what are men?

Go, labor on; your hands are weak;  
Your knees are faint, your soul cast down;  
Yet falter not; the prize you seek  
Is near—a kingdom and a crown!

—Horatius Bonar

**Regard** (3049) (**logizomai** from **lógos** = reason, word, account) means to reckon, compute, calculate, to take into account, to deliberate, and to weigh. **Logizomai** refers to a process of careful study or reasoning which results in the arriving at a conclusion. **Logizomai** was a term frequently used in the business community of Paul's day and meant to impute (put to one's account) or credit to one's account. Uses in Corinthians - 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 13:5; 1 Co. 13:11; 2 Co. 3:5; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 10:2; 2 Co. 10:7; 2 Co. 10:11; 2 Co. 11:5; 2 Co. 12:6

**Servants** (5257) (**huperetes** from **hupo** = under, beneath + **eretes** = a rower) is literally and under oarsman and then a subordinate, a servant, an attendant (Lk 4:20), one who is in the service of another or an assistant in general. **Huperetes** describes a helper who willingly submits himself to carrying out the will of the one over him. Huperetes "were the most menial, unenvied, and despised of slaves." (MacArthur) The word denotes subordination (originally an under-rower in a trireme, a ship with three banks of oars) and is different from the "servants" used in 1 Cor 3:5 (**diakonos**). In John 7:32, 45, 46 it is used of the Temple "police" or guards. Servants of the word describes these men as focused on the word, listening and acting according to the word. "They not only had personal knowledge of the facts but also practical experience of the facts." (Plummer). The word was also used of medical assistants or attendants. 20x in 20v - Matt. 5:25; Matt. 26:58; Mk. 14:54; Mk. 14:65; Lk. 1:2; Lk. 4:20; Jn. 7:32; Jn. 7:45; Jn. 7:46; Jn. 18:3; Jn. 18:12; Jn. 18:18; Jn. 18:22; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 19:6; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:26; Acts 13:5; Acts 26:16; 1 Co. 4:1

**Wikipedia Article** - [Hyperetes](#)

**Zodhiates** adds that "The word **hupērētēs** in classical Greek was used of the messenger of the gods, who



was called by that name. In the context, this can only mean that such a messenger, as a servant, was executing the will of Zeus, and thus had behind him the power and authority of Zeus as chief of the ancient mythological gods of the Greeks. The men of Delphi, for instance, were called *hupērétai*, "servants," of Apollo in the same sense, since in his name they proclaimed the will of him who declared himself in the oracle." ([1 Corinthians Commentary](#))

## **'PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD**

**And stewards** - While **servants** (*huperetes*) speaks of subordination to Christ, steward speaks of accountability to Christ. Literally "house managers" one who was in total control of a household While **servants** (above) emphasizes a leader's subordinate position to Christ, **stewards** emphasizes their responsibility to Christ. Paul and Apollos were **stewards** who had been entrusted with the Gospel even as secular stewards were entrusted with the management of property while the Owner was away (in this case Jesus as the owner of the Church, His body). As **stewards** Paul and Apollos were subordinate to Christ, trusted by Him and ultimately accountable to Him when He returns on that day. As Jesus said

"Who then is the faithful and sensible **steward** (*oikonomos*), whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the **proper time** (*kairos* - same word used in 1 Cor 4:5+ = "before the time [*kairos*]")? 43 **Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.** 44 "Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions... 48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more. (Lk 12:42-44+)

Comment: "So a teacher or a preacher in this household of faith is to take God's revealed word and dispense it to the household." (Goins)

Given the fact that the **steward** in secular writings was the person over the household, the comments by **Lightfoot** are apropos- "The church is the *oikos* (1 Tim. 3:15), God the *oikodespotes* (Matt. 13:52+), the members the *oikeioi* (Gal. 6:10+; Eph. 2:19)"

Paul took this stewardship seriously and soberly, writing to the saints at Colossae

Of this *church* I was made a **minister** (*diakonos*) according to the **stewardship** (*oikonomia*) from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, (Col 1:25+)

**Comment** - Paul understood that his stewardship of the mysteries of God came with an accountability to God, ultimately Christ the Head of His "House" (the Church, His Body). He understood that stewardship stresses **obligation, responsibility, and faithfulness** of the servant to his master in carry out the entrusted task. Beloved, **EACH ONE OF YOU** has been given "a special (spiritual) gift" which begs a solemn, sobering question "Are you employing it "in serving one another as good stewards (*oikonomos*) of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10-11+)

**Adam Clarke** says the **steward** "was the master's deputy in regulating the concerns of the family, providing food for the household, seeing it served out at proper times and seasons, and in proper quantities. He received all the cash, expended what was necessary for the support of the family, and kept exact accounts, for which he was obliged at certain times to lay before the master."

**Zodhiates** has an interesting comment on **stewards** - What this implies is that none of us who proclaim the gospel are actually owners of what we manage....Just as our orders as servants of Christ are received directly from Christ, so our stewardship is directly reportable to Christ. Daily accounting to Him is necessary. Paul speaks later on of our accounting to Him in that day when all our work will be made manifest, but there must also be a daily accounting to see whether we are daily pleasing to Him.....Every Christian should daily come to Christ to give an account and to take orders. We should not hesitate to bring to Him in detail what has transpired. Sometimes we will have to confess, "Lord, there were many minutes and hours when I goofed and wasted time when I should have been working." Though we might never think of stealing money, we often waste time and miss opportunities that should uplift Christ (see C. H. Spurgeon, [An All-Round Ministry](#), pp. 252-81)....Paul wants to remind us by this expression that we are accountable. He has just finished speaking of that day when the work of each one will be made manifest. Just imagine how careless a treasurer might be if he knew that he would never have to give an accounting of the funds entrusted to him. As Christians, we are to live constantly in view of the day of accounting that is coming. We will have to give an accounting for everything God has given us.

**Glenn Spencer** - Stewardship is the management of affairs entrusted to one by another. A biblical steward is a servant who faithfully manages his Master's affairs. God is the creator and owner of everything and if we have possession of anything, it is because God

has entrusted it to our stewardship. Stewardship involves using all that God has entrusted to us in a way that will please Him. Whatever our possessions, whether it be a weekly paycheck, a car, a home to live in, our health or even the very air we breathe, whatever it may be we have it because of the goodness of God. Just like this servant's master made him steward over all his household, God has given every believe and area of service. What a great responsibility it is to be a steward of God. May we do our work with the realization that it is the Lord God of Heaven that we serve.

**Jack Arnold** - Every Greek knew what a steward was. He was a privileged slave, picked out and set apart from the other slaves by the master of the household to oversee the household. He was a slave who was elevated above the other slaves and given the responsibility of dispensing to the members of the household the provisions and the stores of the master. A steward was not the master but a slave of the master. Today the nearest equivalent would be an administrator. The steward was entrusted with certain valuable commodities which he was responsible to dispense. The minister is called by God, in a special sense from other saints, to dispense "the secret things of God." The "secret things" or "mysteries" are the truths of the gospel and the whole counsel of God as found in the Bible and which cannot be known by any human reasoning. Ministers are primarily dispensers of truth. The Lord Jesus, the Master, has entrusted His ministers with His truth and they are to faithfully preserve it and dispense this truth as preachers and teachers of the Word of God. The ministers must not teach human, worldly wisdom to the flock but divine, godly wisdom which is found only in the Bible and nowhere else. Ministers are to dispense divine truth so that lives are changed and lived on the basis of divine wisdom, revealed truth as found in the Bible. God's ministers have no authority of their own. They have authority but it comes to them by Christ. They are subordinate to Christ. They merely handle truth. Therefore, Christians ought to exalt the originator of truth, Christ, and not the handlers of the truth, God's ministers. ([1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**Stewards** (manager) (3623)([oikonomos](#) from [oikos](#) = house + [némo](#) = manage, distribute, dispense) (see related [oikonomia](#)) is literally the manager or superintendent of a household or estate. The **steward** was accountable to the owner (which even involved a presentation and examination of records, receipts, disbursements, cash on hand and the settlement of accounts [cf 1 Cor 4:5] - our English words "economy", "economic" are derived from [oikonomia](#) and this background helps one see some association) **BDAG** - one who is entrusted with management in connection with transcendent matters (1 Cor 4:1, Titus 1:7, 1 Pe 4:10) **Vincent** says that in the Greek culture the **steward** was the one who "assigns to the members of the household their several duties, and pays to each his wages. The paymaster. He kept the household stores under lock and seal, giving out what was required; and for this purpose received a signet-ring from his master." **Vine** adds that [oikonomos](#) is "used metaphorically, in the wider sense, of a "steward" in general, (a) of preachers of the Gospel and teachers of the Word of God, 1 Cor. 4:1; (b) of elders or bishops in churches, Titus 1:7; (c) of believers generally, 1 Pet. 4:10." Used 10x in 10v - Lk. 12:42; Lk. 16:1; Lk. 16:3; Lk. 16:8; Rom. 16:23; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 4:2; Gal. 4:2; Tit. 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10

Titus 1:2 - the overseer must be above reproach as God's **steward** ([oikonomos](#)), not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain,

**Of the mysteries of God** - Ministers as stewards did not manage a house, but in this case managed and were responsible for the mysteries of God. Mystery speaks of a divine truth, previously hidden and knowable only by divine revelation. In the only other use of mystery in First Corinthians (see "Related Passages" above), mystery referred to God's wisdom and ultimately the wisdom of the Cross of Christ. The steward was to dispense these mysteries with faithfulness. As an aside these mysteries revealed by the Spirit of Christ to believers are still a "mystery" to the natural (unsaved) man who in their blindness even considers them foolishness (1 Cor 2:14+)!

**Mysteries** (3466)([musterion](#) from [mustes](#) = one initiated [as into the [Greco-Roman "mystery" religions](#)] from [mueo](#) = to close or shut) in the NT is a truth never previously known, a truth which human intellect could never discover, but one which has now been made known by divine revelation. The term signifies not only a previously hidden truth, presently divulged, but one that contains a supernatural element that still remains in spite of the revelation.

In Paul's day **musterion** was a technical term utilized by the "mystery religions" which referred to a secrets concealed by strange customs and ceremonies and confided only to those initiated into the "mystery cult". **Musterion** embraced ideas such as "a secret rite," "secret teaching," and "a divine mystery which is beyond human comprehension." The "mystery-religions" had their secrets and signs just as seen in modern secret societies. Those initiated into these pagan cults, knew these secret signs. Uses of **musterion** in letters to Corinth - 1 Co. 2:7; 1 Co. 4:1; 1 Co. 13:2; 1 Co. 14:2; 1 Co. 15:51.

The mysteries revealed by God include the following. The mysteries are....

- of the kingdom of heaven - Mt 13:3-50, esp Mt 13:11



- of Israel's blindness during this age Ro 11:25
- of translation of living saints at end of age 1Co 15:51,52; 1Th 4:13-17
- the Church = body of Jews & Gentiles Ep 3:1-12; Ep 6:19; Col 4:3
- the Church as bride of Christ - Ep 5:23-32
- Christ living in believers - Gal 2:20; Col 1:26,27)
- The mystery of God ~ Christ, the incarnate fullness of Godhead embodied, in Whom all divine wisdom for man subsists - 1Co 2:7; Col 2:2-3 ,9
- the processes by which godlikeness is restored to man 1Ti 3:16
- lawlessness = already at work - 2Th2:7; cp Mt1 3:33)
- the seven stars = angels (aggelos) - Rev 1:20
- the mystery of Babylon - Rev 17:5,7

**Life Application Study Bible.** - A servant does what his master tells him to do. We must do what God tells us to do in the Bible and through his Holy Spirit. Each day God presents us with needs and opportunities that challenge us to do what we know is right.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Ministers of Christ are "**stewards**" of the mysteries of God. The word "**steward**" (oikonomos, Gk.) literally means "one who is the law of the house" or "custodian." "**Mysteries**" refer to those truths of God which cannot be discovered by man but must be revealed by God (cf. Eph. 3:3). Therefore, a minister's responsibility is to serve as the custodian of God's revealed truths.

**ILLUSTRATION** - We've all seen "chain letters" but I've never seen one worth passing on until this one.. It is entitled, The Perfect Pastor. Let me share part of it with you.

- The perfect pastor preaches exactly 10 minutes.
- He condemns sin roundly but never hurts anyone's feelings.
- He works from 8:00 a.m. Until midnight and is also the church janitor.
- The perfect pastor makes \$40 a week, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, donates \$30 a week to the church.
- He is 29 years old and had 40 years experience.
- Above all, he is handsome.
- The perfect pastor has a burning desire to work with teenagers, and he spends most of his time with senior citizens.
- He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his church.
- He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office to be handy when needed.
- The perfect pastor always has time for the church council and all of its committees.
- He never misses the meeting of any church organization and is always busy evangelizing the unchurched.

**The postscript states:** "The perfect pastor is always in a church other than your own. If your pastor does not measure up, simply send this notice to six other churches that are tired of their pastor. Then bundle up your pastor and send him to the church at the top of the list. If everyone cooperates, in one week you will receive 1,643 pastors. One of them should be perfect. Have faith in this letter. One church broke the chain and got its old pastor back in less than three months."

Have you noticed that in churches folks either CRITICIZE their pastor or IDOLIZE their pastor.

- Some are critical of every word, every action, every decision. There's no way he could do anything right.
- Others idolize their pastor. They put him on a pedestal and give him almost papal respect.
- As popular as that practice may be, it is exceedingly offensive to God. (From Pastor Lowell Johnson)

## Keep On Rowing

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. —1 Corinthians 4:1

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:18-4:1

I once saw a cartoon depicting a group of shackled prisoners standing on a dock, waiting for a Roman galley that was pulling into port. "That's a great ship," one mused. "I wonder what makes it go?"

The sketch reminded me of the words of the apostle Paul: "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ" (1 Corinthians 4:1). Paul used an unusual Greek word for servants. Literally, it means "under-rowers," and in that day it referred to the slaves that pulled the

oars in Roman warships.

What a striking word picture! The great apostle, who could have asserted his authority, considered himself a mere galley slave in the hold of the ship with the rest of God's people, pulling on an oar with everyone else.

This is different from our usual concept of leadership. We tend to think of a regally dressed captain standing on the deck of a great sailing vessel, "calling the shots" and controlling the ship.

The Lord Jesus is our true Captain. The direction in which a church or any other ministry goes, the speed with which it develops, and the size to which it grows is His prerogative. Our task, no matter what our position or work, is to keep our eyes on Jesus and to keep on rowing. By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Master needs what you have to offer,  
No matter if you think it's small;  
His work on earth is done through His children,  
So give Him your best, give your all. —Hess

Leaders don't attain greatness by giving orders, but by serving others.

### **1 Corinthians 4:2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.**

Amplified - Moreover, it is [essentially] required of stewards that a man should be found faithful [proving himself worthy of trust].

Wuest - Under these circumstances it is further sought in stewards that a man be found to be faithful. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 4:2 Now what is sought in stewards is that one be found faithful.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:2 Now, a person who is put in charge as a manager must be faithful.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

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

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:2 δε λοιπὸν ὑμεῖς ζητεῖτε τὸ πιστὸς εἶναι ὡς οἱ κὸνοι τοῦ κυρίου.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:2 and as to the rest, it is required in the stewards that one may be found faithful,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:2 Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:2 In this regard, it is expected of managers that each one of them be found faithful.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:2 Now it is of course required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:2 In such a matter, what is expected of stewards is that each one should be found trustworthy.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:2 Managers are required to be trustworthy.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:2 And it is right for such servants to be safe persons.

- that: 1Co 4:17 7:25 Nu 12:7 Pr 13:17 Mt 25:21,23 Lu 12:42 16:10-12 2Co 2:17 4:2 Col 1:7 4:7,17

## **REQUIREMENT FOR STEWARDS TRUSTWORTHINESS**

**Trustworthy** means warranting someone's trust, worthy of being trusted.

**In this case, moreover, it is required** ([zeteeo](#) - sought) **of stewards that one be found trustworthy** - NET = "Now what is sought

in stewards is that one be found faithful." Note he does not say be found fruitful, but be found faithful. God will take care of the fruit if we are faithful for He alone causes the growth. One should be able to put their confidence in the steward. **Be found** means to discover by inquiry or by experience and speaks of observing the individual by being around them. The observation of the steward proves that the person is worthy of one's trust. In context he is to be consistently teaching the Word of God and the mysteries of God. This is the word Paul used to describe Timothy as his "**beloved and faithful child in the Lord,**" (1 Cor 4:17+) who he would send the Corinthians, because he knew he could trust Timothy to preach the Word of God to them. In other words Paul could wholeheartedly trust Timothy to pick up with what Paul had been teaching them. Paul had "found" Timothy "trustworthy" by observing him.

Trustworthy means being steadfast in one's affection or allegiance, being loyal to a cause or a person, being constant, persistent, and faithful.

**THOUGHT** - This passage applies to all believers "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10+) The question is will I be found faithful when the Lord Jesus comes back? Only by God's grace and Word and Spirit. Let it be so Lord. Amen.

**Hodge** - It is a small matter how people may estimate the faithfulness of ministers. The only competent judge is the Lord; and, therefore, the decision of that question should be referred to his judgment (1 Cor 4:3–6).

**Spurgeon on it is required of stewards** - This text primarily refers to those who labor in word and doctrine, those to whom it is a life's vocation. Yet in another sense all believers are "servants of Christ and managers of the mysteries of God" (v. 1). Consider the responsibilities of faithful managers, the dangers awaiting managers, and the reward for faithful managers.

**MacArthur** quotes the words of Jesus - "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time?" Jesus asked. "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes" (Matt. 24:45–46). When the Lord returns, the only absolute requirement by which He will judge His servants is faithfulness: were they true to their Lord's commands? God supplies His Word, His Spirit, His gifts, and His power. All that the minister can supply is his faithfulness in using those resources. The work is demanding but is basically simple: taking God's Word and feeding it faithfully to His people—dispensing the mysteries of God, proclaiming the hidden truths He has made known. There is to be no glory here, ranking one above the other. The best that any minister can be is faithful, which is just fulfilling the basic requirement.

**Jack Arnold** - The first responsibility of a **steward** ([oikonomos](#)) in the master's household was to dispense the provisions. The second responsibility was that he should be faithful and **trustworthy** to do exactly what the master told him to do. The steward was left on his own and the master might wonder, "Can I trust him with my house?" God has entrusted the gospel and the whole Bible and His church to the minister of Christ, and he must be faithful in dispensing the secrets of God so people can understand them. If a minister is to be faithful to Christ, he will not take to himself any authority which Christ has not given him. For a minister to preach and command the congregation to do something God has not commanded would be unfaithfulness to the Master, Christ. To keep some part of God's Word from the flock when they need it would be unfaithfulness to the Master. To be faithful to the Master means not to withhold in any sense what the Master has entrusted to him to give to others. God's ministers are to be judged according to their faithfulness. The minister must be faithful in teaching God's Word and not be a man pleaser, for the only one he must please is Jesus Christ. God will judge His stewards on faithfulness, not success, numbers, big churches, huge buildings, the number of books written, or whatever else man conceives as success. God's stewards must be faithful, faithful, faithful! The steward of God cannot neglect to feed the flock the Word, nor may he adulterate the Word, nor may he take away or add anything to the Word. He must be faithful. The task of the steward is faithfulness to his Master alone, not kowtowing to every demand of other servants whether they be leaders or congregation. He must be faithful regardless of the external results or the consequences. A minister is to be faithful not a perfectionist who does everything right. The pastor does his ministry for Christ not other people. The pastor who wants to please people and be liked by people will always be performance oriented. Ministers perform for God not people. ([1 Corinthians 3:18-4:5 Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**Knofel Staton** - A person who is more concerned about the quality of his service rather than being a faithful steward will become somewhat paranoid over his service to the Lord. In fact, he may easily begin to see service as more of a performance for an audience of people around him rather than a ministry, with God himself as his audience. There is a big difference in ministering to people with God as the audience and performing in front of people with them as the audience. A person who does the latter will easily think he did not do well if he makes a mistake or if he doesn't get praised. And a person can easily then begin to practice flawless performances apart from faithful service" ([1 Corinthians](#)).

**Ryrie** - Reliability was the one necessary virtue for stewards, who were managers or administrators of large estates.

**Stewards** (manager) ([3623](#)) see [oikonomos](#)

**Trustworthy** (faithful) (4103)(**pistos**) from **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc Pistos means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. **Pistos** describes being steadfast in your affection or allegiance, being loyal to a cause or a person, being constant, loyal and persistent, trustworthy. **Webster** says that "**Faithful**" means firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance and implies unswerving adherence to a person or thing or to the oath or promise by which a tie was contracted. All uses in Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:9; 1 Co. 4:2; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 1:18; 2 Co. 6:15

**ILLUSTRATION** Managers are appointed to look after other servants. Managers have not only their own work to complete, but it is part of their work to look after the work of other people. Also, a manager is under the master's direct command. An ordinary servant may take orders from the manager, but the manager takes orders only from the master and must keep up daily fellowship with the master so he knows the master's mind and is able to communicate it to fellow servants. The manager also is called on to give an account. Further, a manager is entrusted with the master's goods. This is the main point of the manager's stewardship—nothing is his own—all is the master's. The manager is entrusted with the master's property to protect it. And the manager is entrusted with the master's property to dispense it. The manager keeps the master's supplies and sees that they are not wasted, but he also takes care to magnify the master's liberality by seeing that none of the household has any need. Besides this, the manager is to use the master's property for the master's benefit. Finally, a manager is charged with the general care of the family. The manager is not merely to look after the master's material possessions; he has to take care of all the family. How are we, as managers, in danger of not being faithful? We can readily be unfaithful by acting as if we are masters. Next, a great deal of unfaithfulness is caused by endeavoring to please people. If the manager begins to try to please his fellow servants and to curry favor with them so they will speak well of him, he will soon be a traitor to his master. Also, we can injure our faithfulness by idling, or trifling, or growing careless, or leaving our hearts out of our work. Further, we can prove ourselves unfaithful managers by misusing our Master's goods, employing what he entrusted to us for some other end than his glory, or by neglecting some of the household. We can also become unfaithful managers by complaining about whatever is wrong with our fellow servants. And we may prove unfaithful by forgetting that our Lord will come soon, and thus we neglect being about his business. Supposing we are good managers, what will the result be? A reward from our Master's own lips. On the day of accounting he will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Mt 25:23).

#### **Related Resources:**

- Torrey Topical Textbook [Faithfulness of God, the Faithfulness](#)
- American Tract Society [Faithfulness](#)
- Baker's Evangelical Dictionary [Faithfulness](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Faithful](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Faithfulness \(2\)](#)
- King James Dictionary [Faithfulness](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Faithful](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Faithfulness](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Faithful; Faithfulness](#)

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#### **Our Awesome Responsibility**

It is required in stewards that one be found faithful. — 1 Corinthians 4:2

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3:6-4:5

What activity, what confusion surrounds us day after day! And we ourselves are busily carrying out plans and projects. In the midst of all this, the Lord is also at work. He's building His church, extending His kingdom of grace and love, moving history to its God-honoring goal.

In all of His activity, the Lord is seeking to bring people into a love relationship with Himself. But love can't be mechanically coerced. It must be freely offered from the heart. God doesn't get people to love Him by proclaiming ear-splitting messages as if He were using a supernatural loudspeaker. He doesn't dispatch angels to astound unbelievers all around the globe. He doesn't fill the sky with spectacular signs.

The Lord wants the free trust and grateful love of men and women, boys and girls. So He works through believers as we obey the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and build our lives on a relationship with Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11-23). It's through your life and mine, through our dedicated talents, through our personal witness and united ministry that God is winning the trust and obedience of lost people everywhere.

What an honor to be God's co-laborers—and what a big responsibility to be faithful stewards! (1 Corinthians 4:2). Vernon Grounds

We know that millions haven't heard  
About God's only Son,  
So we must witness where we are  
And tell them one by one. —Sper

We must go to sinners if we expect sinners to come to the Savior.

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### Faithfulness Required

It is required in stewards that one be found faithful. —1 Corinthians 4:2

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5,14-20

Much of our attention and praise is directed toward highly visible and successful people. But occasionally we read about an ordinary, obscure person being honored for many years of faithful service. It may be a school custodian, a cafeteria worker, a handyman, or a clerk in a store who has served others in a dependable and unselfish way.

That kind of reliability often goes unnoticed, but I believe it's a powerful picture of how we are to live. Although consistency may not be flashy, days add up to a life of great significance to God.

Paul wrote, "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). If we live faithfully for Christ, God has promised to reward us at His appointed time. When the Lord comes, He "will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God" (v.5).

When we long for success, God says, "I will reward you."

When we ache for recognition, God says, "I see you."

When we are ready to quit, God says, "I will help you."

Whether our service is public or private, our responsibility is the same—to be faithful. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In all the little things of life,  
Yourself, Lord, may I see;  
In little and in great alike,  
Help me to faithful be! —Anon.

God doesn't ask us to be successful but to be faithful.

**1 Corinthians 4:3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself.**

Amplified - But [as for me personally] it matters very little to me that I should be put on trial by you [on this point], and that you or any other human tribunal should investigate and question and cross-question me. I do not even put myself on trial and judge myself.

Wuest - But with me it is a very small thing that I am being put on trial by you by the [judicial] day of mankind. In fact, I do not even put myself on trial, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 4:3 So for me, it is a minor matter that I am judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:3 As for me, it matters very little how I might be evaluated by you or by any human authority. I don't even trust my own judgment on this point.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

NIV 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.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:3 μο ὀ ες λ χιστ ν σιν, να φ μ ν νακριθ π νθρωπ νης μ ρας· λλ ο ὀ μαυ ν νακρ νω.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:3 and to me it is for a very little thing that by you I may be judged, or by man's day, but not even myself do I judge,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:3 It is of little importance to me that I should be evaluated by you or by any human court. In fact, I don't even evaluate myself.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:3 It does not concern me in the least that I be judged by you or any human tribunal; I do not even pass judgment on myself;

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:3 It is of no importance to me how you or any other human court may judge me: I will not even be the judge of my own self.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:3 It means very little to me that you or any human court should cross-examine me. I don't even ask myself questions.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:3 But it is a small thing to me that I am judged by you or by man's judging; I am not even a judge of myself.

- **it is:** 1 Co 2:15 1Sa 16:7 Joh 7:24
- **judgment:** 1Co 3:13

**But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you** NIV - "care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court;" Amplified "I should be put on trial by you [on this point]," The idea of examined is to give a very thorough examination. Paul is not concerned about what men say. As we might say it does not [carry a lot of weight](#) with him! Aren't we all thankful that men's judgment is not the final verdict!

**Jack Arnold** - Paul now begins to deal with the problem of who ultimately evaluates a minister. Everyone wants to get in on this act of evaluating his faithfulness or unfaithfulness in the ministry. This puts a subtle and constant pressure on all men called to the ministry. The first pressure Paul mentions is congregational evaluation. He does not say it did not matter at how he was judged by the Corinthians, but it mattered very little how they judged him. Paul is not suggesting the pastor should never listen to others nor seek to know how others evaluate him. The minister should always listen to the honest evaluations from his leadership and sometimes from his congregation, but congregational evaluation has its shortcomings. What Paul is saying is that no pastor should lay himself open to the whims and petty wishes of people, for in so doing, he would go crazy. He would become totally paranoid. In essence Paul is saying to the Corinthians, "I know you are thinking about me and I know what you think (and its not good), but I want you to know I do not think it very significant." He really did not care whether they thought him, faithful or unfaithful. His ultimate responsibility was not to them. They had not called him, or sent him, or told him what doctrines to preach, nor was he their steward; he was the steward of God. A minister answers ultimately to Christ not men. **Stuart Briscoe** says there are three kinds of congregational pressure. **Adulation** which swells the head, causing many ministers to believe all the nice things people say about them. **Manipulation** in which people try to manipulate the pastor by force. Every local congregation has its power structure. There are people who seek to influence the preaching and teaching by iron-fisted, authoritarian bullying, by stopping all giving to the church, by threatening to leave the church, by persistent hounding and complaining. There are many things a congregation can do to put pressure on a minister to stop him from being a servant and steward. Whenever a pastor begins to listen to the crowd, he is in trouble. Whenever he begins to pass over unpleasant doctrines or spiritual subjects he knows will cause controversy with the power structure, he destroys himself and the spiritual life of his congregation. Manipulation puts a harness on a pastor and ties his hands so that he cannot be effective. Many a man has left the ministry because he ran up against the power structure of the local church. Instead of quitting, the pastor should stay and be a faithful servant and steward, knowing God will take care of him. **Antagonism** is



the last form of pressure applied by a congregation on the minister. This is outright, sharp, open-faced opposition which may take the form of open rebellion or a whispering campaign. Mr. Briscoe says, "Adulation swells the head; manipulation ties the hands, and antagonism breaks the preacher's heart" ([Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**or by any human court** - Amplified "and that you or any other human tribunal should investigate and question and cross-question me." Literally the idea is "human day" or as we might say Paul's "[day in court](#)." Judgment by the unsaved world was of no concern to him. Even the Supreme Court is not qualified to examine one of God's servants in spiritual matters. Paul was willing to leave his judgment in the hands of the true Supreme Court Judge, the one to Whom he must answer ultimately, Christ Jesus (2 Ti 4:1+).

**in fact, I do not even examine myself**- Amplified "I do not even put myself on trial and judge myself." Paul has just described his stewardship and now implies that the Corinthians were examining his stewardship. Paul is speaking of self-evaluation, a snare probably most pastors get caught in at one time or another - "I wonder if they like that sermon?" "No one smiled when I gave my humorous illustration." Etc, etc.

**Arnold** adds that "A minister's evaluation of himself is as irrelevant as any other man's evaluation of him. This does not mean Paul never sat down by himself or with his elders or the congregations he taught to evaluate the effectiveness of his ministry. What he is saying is that his judgment was incomplete; his heart was still sinful; he did not have all the facts; he had blind spots about his ministry and he could not know all the motivations of his heart as he was performing his ministry. ([Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**Examined...examine** (350)([anakrino](#)) means to examine accurately or carefully (re-examine); make careful and exact research as in legal processes. To examine or question in order to pass a judicial sentence or to examine accurately or carefully.

## 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord.

Amplified - I am not conscious of anything against myself, and I feel blameless; but I am not vindicated and acquitted before God on that account. It is the Lord [Himself] Who examines and judges me.

Wuest - for I am conscious of not even one thing against myself, but not by this means do I stand justified. Indeed, He who puts me on trial is the Lord. ([Erdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not acquitted because of this. The one who judges me is the Lord.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:4 My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

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

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:4 ο δ ν γ ρ μαυτ σ νοιδα, λλ ο κ ν το τ δεδικα ωμαι, δ νακρ νων με κ ρι ς σπιν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:4 for of nothing to myself have I been conscious, but not in this have I been declared right -- and he who is discerning me is the Lord:

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. The One who evaluates me is the Lord.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:4 I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:4 I am not conscious of anything against me, but I do not thereby stand acquitted; the one who judges me is the Lord.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:4 It is true that my conscience does not reproach me, but that is not enough to justify me: it is the Lord who is my judge.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:4 I have a clear conscience, but that doesn't mean I have God's approval. It is the Lord who cross-examines me.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:4 For I am not conscious of any wrong in myself; but this does not make me clear, for it is the Lord who is my judge.

- **I am conscious** Job 27:6 Ps 7:3-5 Joh 21:17 2Co 1:12 1Jn 3:20-21
- **yet I am not by this acquitted:** Job 9:2,3,20 15:14 25:4 40:4 Ps 19:12 130:3 143:2 Pr 21:2 Ro 3:19,20 4:2
- **but:** 1Co 4:5 Ps 26:12 50:6 2Co 5:10

### Related Passage

2 Cor. 1:12 For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you.

## PAUL'S CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR BUT GOD IS THE FINAL JUDGE

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation. Always begs question "What is being explained?"

This passage in context indicates some of the Corinthians were judging Paul. And one thought is that as the Corinthians boasted in men like Apollos or Cephas were at the same time examining or judging Paul.

**I am conscious of nothing against myself** - NLT paraphrases it "My conscience is clear." **Amplified** - "and I feel blameless" **I am conscious** is [sunoida](#) (only here and Acts 5:2 root of Greek word for conscience = [suneidesis](#)) which means to share knowledge with and to know about oneself (what others know not). In this case Paul reflectively says I know within myself of nothing (ouden - absolutely nothing) against myself, indeed "of not even one thing against myself" (Wuest). And yet Paul knows that even saved men can still make faulty judgments which is why he makes the following statement. "An unaccusing conscience does not itself imply freedom from guilt." (Vine)

**MacArthur**- Matters of outward sin are to be judged as 1 Timothy 5:19–21 indicates. But apart from the discipline of sinning servants, we can make no absolutely accurate judgment as to the faithfulness of heart, mind, and body of any servant of God.

**yet** - (alla) Strong term of contrast.

**I am not by this acquitted** - The KJV could be confusing as it reads "yet am I not hereby justified," which clearly does not refer to the [doctrine of justification by faith!](#) Amplified = "but I am not vindicated and acquitted before God on that account." Paul's words remind me of another man after God's own heart, David writing "**Who can discern his errors?** (IN LIGHT OF THIS REALITY, DAVID PRAYS) **Acquit me of hidden faults.**" (Ps 19:10). Godly men, no matter how holy and ostensibly blameless, recognize their sinful nature and the fact that they commit sins that they are not even aware are sins (thus David's question).

**Guzik** - Even our estimation of ourselves is usually wrong. We are almost always too hard or too easy on ourselves. Paul recognizes this, and so will suspend judgment even upon himself.

**Acquitted** (vindicated in perfect tense) ([1344](#))([dikaioo](#) from **dike** = right, expected behavior or conformity, not according to one's own standard, but according to an imposed standard with prescribed punishment for nonconformity) primarily means to deem to be right. **Dikaioo** describes the act by which a man is brought into a right state of relationship to God. **Dikaioo** is a legal term having to do with the law and the courtroom, where it represented the legally binding verdict of the judge. This is the sense in which Paul uses **dikaioo** in this section in Romans (Ro 3:21-5:11) in which he unfolds the doctrine of justification.

**but** - term of contrast.

**The One Who examines** ([anakrino](#) in present tense - continually examines) **me is the Lord** ([kurios](#) - Master, Possessor) - The Lord is the perfect Judge, for He alone sees our heart and He alone can judge the motives of our heart. Paul explains that not even he

was qualified to judge himself, but that the Lord Jesus would judge him (and each believer at the [bema](#) seat) in the day of His return. And His judgment is independent of men's judgment.

**Arnold** - Paul looked at his own life and ministry and found nothing condemning about it. Surely he had times of doubt, times of indifference, and times of making mistakes, but he dealt with these things before God. Paul could think of no great matter where he had fallen down in his stewardship. As far as he knew, he carried out his ministry faithfully and at the time of writing the Corinthians was pleasing to Christ. Would that all ministers could say this! Yet, even if Paul's conscience was clear, that did not get him off the hook. The only impartial, competent and final judge is the Lord Himself. ([Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

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### **F B Meyer - There are four courts of trial.**

First: Man's judgment. — It is significantly spoken of as man's "day." Our conduct is narrowly scrutinised and weighed by many eyes which we know not of, but which are fixed on every act and word — the eyes of our neighbors, associates, fellow workpeople, servants. They are ever reasoning about us, comparing our lives with our professions, partly with the view of excusing themselves, if there is any gross inconsistency. But, after all, their verdict need not greatly move us. It is only for a day.

Second: The judgment of fellow-Christians. — We are perpetually being summoned before the court of the church circle to which we belong; not always because we are inconsistent with our professions, but whenever we overstep the pace at which the majority is slowly moving. To be too zealous, too eager, too earnest, too particular, will, in some Christian communities, expose to a great deal of adverse criticism. But we have not to look right and left to get the sentence of our fellow-believers when we are clearly prompted by the Spirit of God.

Third: The judgment of conscience. — "I judge not mine own self." We are all apt to arraign ourselves at our own bar, and pass verdicts which are altogether favorable, because we compare ourselves with characters and standards inferior to ourselves. It is a great mistake to judge yourself, for even if you score a favorable verdict — if you know nothing against yourself — it is liable to be reversed by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

Fourth: The Lord's judgment. — The Lord will come, bringing to light the hidden things of darkness, and making manifest the counsels of the heart.

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### **What Really Matters**

He who judges me is the Lord. —1 Corinthians 4:4

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-13

In 1985, Frederick Holliday, the superintendent of Cleveland's public schools, shot himself through the heart with a .357 magnum. In a suicide note he said that although he had achieved great success, he could not tolerate being stripped of his dignity by the unfair and vicious accusations leveled against him by his opponents.

Taking his own life, though, left family and friends heartbroken. I wish that Holliday would have chosen instead to follow the example of the apostle Paul. Although subjected to indignities and insulting accusations, Paul was so conscious of living in the presence of God that His verdict was all that really mattered to him. I am sure the accusations of fellow humans hurt him, and the approval of his own conscience helped him, but his overriding conviction is found in his words, "He who judges me is the Lord" (1 Corinthians 4:4).

Others' unfair opinions of you may be hurting you deeply and causing you to think more unfavorably about yourself than you should. But if you have placed your trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord, and you're trying to do what is right, don't despair. God, who provided for your salvation and has accepted you as His child, sees you and approves of you. And that is what matters most. — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thinking It Over

Do you truly believe that pleasing God is what matters the most? How does that affect the way you relate to family members, co-workers, neighbors, strangers?

If you are convinced that God is for you, it doesn't matter who is against you.

**1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

Amplified - So do not make any hasty or premature judgments before the time when the Lord comes [again], for He will both bring to light the secret things that are [now hidden] in darkness and disclose and expose the [secret] aims (motives and purposes) of hearts. Then every man will receive his [due] commendation from God.

Wuest - Wherefore, stop exercising censorious judgment with reference to anything before the epochal, strategic season, until that time whenever the Lord may come, who will both turn the light on the hidden things of the darkness and bring out into the open the counsels of the hearts. And then to each one there shall come his praise from God. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET 1 Corinthians 4:5 So then, do not judge anything before the time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the motives of hearts. Then each will receive recognition from God.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:5 So don't make judgments about anyone ahead of time-- before the Lord returns. For he will bring our darkest secrets to light and will reveal our private motives. Then God will give to each one whatever praise is due.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:5 στε μ πρ καιρο τι κρ νετε ως ν λθ κ ριος, ς κα φωτ σει τ κρυπτ το σκ τους κα φανερ σει τ ς βουλ ς τ ν καρδι ν· κα τ τε παινος γεν σεται κ στ π το θεο .

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:5 so, then, nothing before the time judge ye, till the Lord may come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then the praise shall come to each from God.

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:5 Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore don't judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come to each one from God.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore, do not make any judgment before the appointed time, until the Lord comes, for he will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will manifest the motives of our hearts, and then everyone will receive praise from God.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:5 For that reason, do not judge anything before the due time, until the Lord comes; he will bring to light everything that is hidden in darkness and reveal the designs of all hearts. Then everyone will receive from God the appropriate commendation.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:5 Therefore, don't judge anything before the appointed time. Wait until the Lord comes. He will also bring to light what is hidden in the dark and reveal people's motives. Then each person will receive praise from God.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:5 For this reason let there be no judging before the time, till the Lord comes, who will

make clear the secret things of the dark, and the designs of the heart; and then will every man have his praise from God.

- **do not go on passing judgment** Mt 7:1,2 Lu 6:37 Ro 2:1,16 14:4,10-13 Jas 4:11
- **wait until** : 1Co 1:7 11:26 15:23 Mt 24:30,46 1Th 5:2 Jas 5:7 2Pe 3:4,12 Jude 1:14 Rev 1:7
- **who**: 1Co 3:13 Ec 11:9 12:14 Mal 3:18 Lu 12:1-3 Ro 2:16 2Co 4:2 Heb 4:13 Rev 20:12
- **each man's praise**: Mt 25:21,23 Joh 5:44 Ro 2:7,29 2Co 5:10 10:18 1Pe 1:7 5:4

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 3:13+ **each man's** ([hekastos](#)) work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test **the quality** of each man's work.

2 Corinthians 5:10+ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that **each one** ([hekastos](#)) may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad ([phaulos](#) = substandard, not [kakos](#) = wicked as in the Textus Receptus - KJV).

### AMAZING FUTURE GRACE... DIVINE PRAISE FOR EVERY SAINT!

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion.

**Arnold** writes that "As to whether Paul was faithful would not be settled by conscience, but by Christ at the Judgment Seat ([bema](#)). The Lord was continually examining Paul's ministry as He is examining every pastor's ministry, and He will judge not only one's works but the motives behind the works. Paul did not mean we should not examine our own works as ministers, or that an elder board or a deacon board, or a bishop, or a congregation should not evaluate the works of a man's ministry. If any minister is in doctrinal error, moral error or is not being faithful to his calling, then he is to be judged. But Paul is talking about motives, and this is where no one should seek to judge a minister or any Christian. We must judge actions but not motives. We should not assume we know what has made somebody act the way he did. We must remember it is the Lord Jesus who calls the minister, commissions him, and entrusts him with the Word, and the minister is ultimately, finally, completely and primarily responsible to the Lord Himself, his Master. ([Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**Do not go on passing judgment before the time but wait until the Lord** ([kurios](#)) **comes- Amplified** - "So do not make any hasty or premature judgments before the time when the Lord comes [again]." Paul commands ([present imperative with a negative](#)) the saints at Corinth to stop continually passing judgment. **The time** ([kairos](#) - "the epochal, strategic season" -Wuest) is defined as a fixed period of time marked by some special feature and/or suitability, in this case the suitability of judgment, occurring after the return of the Lord Jesus Christ at the [Bema Seat of Christ](#) (see 2 Cor 5:10+ = 1 Cor 3:13+). The word **until** ([heos](#)) is a time phrase which is used to link an event marking the end of a time period (Second Coming in this case which marks the end of this present age) to another element in the sentence, in this case the [Bema Seat](#) judgment of the Lord Jesus.

**Guzik** - It is as if Paul were saying, "You Corinthians act like judges at athletic events, qualified to give some the trophy and to send others away as losers. But Jesus is the only judge, and you are judging before the events are over."

**Passing judgment** (decide, determine)([2919](#))([krino](#) root of English critic, critical [kritikos] = a decisive point at which judgment is made) primarily signifies to distinguish, to decide between (in the sense of considering two or more things and reaching a decision), to make up one's mind, to separate, to discriminate. to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, without necessarily passing an adverse sentence, although that is often what is usually involved.

**Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts**([kardia](#)) - **Amplified** = "for He will both bring to light the secret things that are [now hidden] in darkness and disclose and expose the [secret] aims (motives and purposes) of hearts." Jesus as the Light of the World in the sense of salvation, will now examine all works with eyes "like a flame of fire," (Rev 1:14+) and will judge our outward actions by examining our inward motives associated with those actions!

**THOUGHT** - Rewards in the future will not be based as much on what we did but why we did it! Woe! And so our motive should ever be "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor 10:31+) And an excellent supplementary passage would be the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."

**Vine on things hidden** - They refer to that which has been secret in the life, whether hidden **from** the person's own conscience or

purposely kept secret **by** him. They are matters which lie beyond the estimate of our fellows. All things are now “naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do,” (Heb 4:13+) but at the Judgment Seat of Christ they will be manifested in their true character, and seen according to the unerring estimate of Jesus Christ, an estimate based on that which He alone possesses, viz., an absolute knowledge of facts and complete insight into “the counsels of the heart,” the motives which govern actions. See, e.g., Revelation 2:2, 9, 19+; Rev 3:1, 2, 15+ and 2 Corinthians 5:10. (Collected Writings)

**Spencer** - God knows everything about us, every detail, every thought, every word, every work, every secret. Man will be judged according to what God knows about. That is a frightening thought!

**Arnold** - The third pressure put on a minister is premature evaluation. These Corinthians were to stop judging Paul and the other ministers so as to find all kinds of fault with them, following only the one's they liked. All ministers will be judged by Christ. He will bring out the secrets and motivations of the human heart on judgment day, and then the minister will find out whether his ministry was done to exalt self or God, to please men or please Christ. If there was any jealousy, pride or carnality, Christ will drag it out into the light. “There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known” (Matt. 10:26+). Many a servant who looked attractive and sounded good on this earth will be terribly embarrassed at the Judgment Seat of Christ (**ED: I AM NOT SURE I AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT - SAD POSSIBLY**).. Every minister of the gospel should be constantly aware that one day his whole life is going to be examined by his Lord. Christ is going to walk back through his life and reward him for the things that were done for Christ. At that moment, ministers will be praised (rewarded) for the things that were done for Christ and not for their own glory. Until that time, we Christians are not to exalt and praise our ministers so as to give them glory. Nor are we to criticize the motives of their hearts. God will take care of His called servants. What should the church do? They should pray for their pastor and ask God to make him God's man so he can minister to the church with real power. ([Stewards Of The Gospel](#))

**THOUGHT** - This is one of those Bible verses that makes me shudder every time I read this. My flesh is rotten to the core and so capable of making me think I am doing something with God honoring motivation, when the truth is, I am doing it for the acclaim of men! Just being honest! So every time I write a comment on a verse, I have to ask myself, for whose glory am I writing this comment? And sometimes I do not like the answer!

**Bring to light** (Illumine) (5461)([photizo](#) from **phos** = light <> from **phao** = to shine) means literally to give light or to cause light to shine upon some object and illuminating the object. Figuratively, as in the present passage **photizo** means to cause something to be fully known by revealing its nature clearly and in some detail. Used 11x in NT - Lk. 11:36; Jn. 1:9; 1 Co. 4:5; Eph. 1:18; Eph. 3:9; 2 Ti 1:10; Heb. 6:4; Heb. 10:32; Rev. 18:1; Rev. 21:23; Rev. 22:5

**Hidden** (2927)([kruptos](#) from [krupto](#) = keep secret; English ~ cryptic, etc) means concealed, secret, hidden either to protect it or for self-serving purposes. **Krupto** describes something that is unknown because it is being kept secret or hidden. **Liddell-Scott** give an example of a secular use of **kruptos** -- "a trench covered and concealed by planks and earth". **Kruptos** is used 3x in the letters to the Corinthians - 1 Co. 4:5; 1 Co. 14:25; 2 Co. 4:2;

**Darkness** (4655)([skotos](#) from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object) is literally that sphere in which light is absent and describes the primitive chaos before light was created (2 Co 4.6) and literally the outer darkness or place of punishment for those excluded from the kingdom of God (Mt 8.12). As used in 1 Cor 4:5, figuratively **skotos** describes a state of [spiritual or moral darkness](#).

Uses in NT - Matt. 6:23; Matt. 8:12; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 25:30; Matt. 27:45; Mk. 15:33; Lk. 1:79; Lk. 11:35; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 23:44; Jn. 3:19; Acts 2:20; Acts 13:11; Acts 26:18; Rom. 2:19; Rom. 13:12; 1 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 6:14; Eph. 5:8; Eph. 5:11; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13; 1 Thess. 5:4; 1 Thess. 5:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 2:17; 1 Jn. 1:6; Jude 1:13

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What is spiritual darkness? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Disclose** (made manifest, revealed) (5319)([phaneroo](#) from [phanerós](#) = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) is literally "to bring to light" and primarily means "to make visible" or to cause to become visible. The basic meaning of **phaneroo** is to make known, to clearly reveal, to manifest (see Vine's below), to cause to be seen or to make something clear. **Phaneroo** - 1 Co. 4:5; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 4:10; 2 Co. 4:11; 2 Co. 5:10; 2 Co. 5:11; 2 Co. 7:12; 2 Co. 11:6

**Motives** (1012)([boule](#)) when used of man expresses a decision, a purpose or a plan which is the result of inner deliberation. **Boule** is that which has been purposed and planned. **Boule** has in it the ideas of



intelligence and deliberation. In other words **boule** describes the result of deliberate determination which in the present context reflects the product of not just a "mastermind" but God's heart of infinite love.

**And then** - Then is a time phrase begging the question "What time?" In context the answer is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ which Paul described in chapter 1 as "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor 1:8). In 1 Cor 3:13 this is presumably the say "day" Paul writing "each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire."

**Each man's praise will come to him from God - Amplified** = "Then every man will receive his [due] commendation from God." Some believe this means not all will receive praise from the Lord. Others like John MacArthur believe "When the Lord returns, each man will receive praise from God—and from God alone."

The fact that sin has been judged at the Cross and the **bema** is not for our sins should cause us to stop thinking of our past mistakes, sinful and otherwise. We each need to do as Paul did

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting (MEANS COMPLETELY FORGETTING) what lies behind (PAUL HAD A FEW "SKELETONS" FROM HIS PRE-CONVERSION DAYS!) and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Php 3:13-14+)

**Vine** has an interesting comment that "Accordingly this (DIVINE PRAISE) is set in contrast to the undiscerning praise bestowed on party-leaders by their partisans."

**MacArthur** - Because Paul speaks here of **each man's praise**, I do not believe things hidden in the darkness refers to sins or anything evil, but simply to things presently unknown to us. The passage emphasizes that every believer will have praise, no matter what his works and motives, because "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). **All Christians will have some reward and some praise.** Who will receive much and who will receive little only God knows. But once the wood, hay, and straw are burned away, the gold, silver, and precious stones will remain to be eternally rewarded.

**Morris** - "The time" is "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:8) and "the day shall declare it" (1 Corinthians 3:13). At that time, at Christ's judgment seat, "shall every man have praise [literally his praise] of God." Not even Paul was qualified to judge himself (1 Corinthians 4:3); the Lord will judge each of us in that day, regardless of man's judgment

**Each man's** (each and every man, everyone)(1538)(**hekastos** from **hekas** = separate) means each, every one, of any number separately. Uses in the letters to the Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:12; 1 Co. 3:5; 1 Co. 3:8; 1 Co. 3:10; 1 Co. 3:13; 1 Co. 4:5; 1 Co. 7:2; 1 Co. 7:7; 1 Co. 7:17; 1 Co. 7:20; 1 Co. 7:24; 1 Co. 11:21; 1 Co. 12:7; 1 Co. 12:11; 1 Co. 12:18; 1 Co. 14:26; 1 Co. 15:23; 1 Co. 15:38; 1 Co. 16:2; 2 Co. 5:10; 2 Co. 9:7

**Praise** (1868)(**epainos** from **epí** = upon + **aínos** = praise) is literally "praise upon" and denotes commendation, praise, or approbation (an act of formally or officially approving). It means something which is worthy of being commended and so it is praised. In the present context **epainos** describes every believer as worthy of and deserving of divine praise. Detzler writes that "the basic meaning of this word is applause." It speaks of expressed approval or public recognition.

#### Related Resources:

- [1 Corinthians 3 Will Believers Be Judged When Christ Returns?](#) - Question/Answer from John MacArthur
- [1 Corinthians 3:10-4:5, 2 Cor 5:10, Ro 14:10-12 What is the Purpose of the Judgment Seat of Christ?](#) - Question/Answer from John MacArthur
- [1 Corinthians 3:14 Should Christians Be Motivated By Eternal Rewards?](#) - Question/Answer from John MacArthur

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#### D L Moody's One Thousand and One Thoughts from My Library - Judge nothing before the time.

Judge not Christianity even by its most perfect embodiment in the life of its disciples here. The best are imperfect; and Christianity itself teaches this, and points to perfection as yonder. Do not judge the science of that organ-builder by that half-finished instrument in his workshop. There is but little in that to please the eye; and from it scarce a note can be evolved to charm the ear. Judge not the artistic character of that painter by the first rough outline which you discover on the canvas in his studio. There is scarcely a touch of life in it, or any perceptible resemblance to the original. Judge the organ-builder by the instrument as it stands in the great cathedral, pouring forth by the touch of a master-musician pealing strains of music, electrifying the congregated thousands. Judge the artist by the picture as hung up in the Academy of Art; looking, throbbing, and blushing at you as a thing of life; gathering around it a crowd of admiring spectators. Even so judge Christianity. Its organ—the Christian life—is not half finished here in its workshop. Yonder, in the great cathedral of eternity, you will see it in perfection, and feel the inspirations of its harmonies. The painting is not finished here

in its studio: its figure is half formed and blotched; and scarcely a feature is accurate. See it in the great gallery of the heavens, finished, and an exact copy of the Son of God Himself, "Who is the image of the Father's glory."

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## Compliments Given Here

Each one's praise will come from God. —1 Corinthians 4:5

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-8

Artist Tom Greaves knows how to give compliments. He designed a bright red-and-white-striped box for an art exhibit in Washington, DC, called "The Compliment Machine." As people walk by, the machine dishes out compliments from an internal iPod. It says things like, "Your eyes are beautiful," "You smell good," and "People are drawn to your positive energy."

Greaves won't say what his motive is for the box, other than that it's in response to a saccharine culture in which everyone is special and nobody is criticized, regardless of performance.

Everybody loves to hear a compliment now and then; that is, if it's genuine. It makes us feel good about ourselves to have the approval or admiration of others—for a few minutes at least. The apostle Paul, though, looked at what others thought of him or even what he thought of himself as "a very small thing" (1 Cor. 4:3). He said, "He who judges me is the Lord" (v.4). He knew that one day our hearts will be revealed, and "then each one's praise will come from God" (v.5).

Could there be any greater compliment than this from our heavenly Father when we meet Him: "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:23).: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What joy 'twill be to hear Him say,  
"Rejoice, My child, well done!  
You've fought the battles there on earth,  
The victor's crown you've won." —Sherbert

Work well done for Christ will receive a "well done" from Christ.

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## 'Do Your Best!'

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them. —Romans 12:6

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

When Leonardo da Vinci was still a pupil, his elderly, well-known teacher asked him to finish a painting he had begun. Young da Vinci stood in such awe of his master's skill that at first he respectfully declined. But his teacher would accept no excuse. He simply said, "Do your best."

Trembling, da Vinci took his brush and began. With each stroke, his hand grew more steady as the genius within him awoke. Soon he was so caught up in his work that he forgot his timidity. When the painting was finished, the frail and weak master was carried into the studio to see it. Embracing his student, he exclaimed, "My son, I paint no more!"

Every Christian has unique God-given abilities. Some believers, however, feel inferior because they don't have as much talent as others. But we mustn't think that way. God doesn't hold us accountable for what we don't have. He wants us to discover and develop the skills we do have.

Of course, we can't all be a Leonardo da Vinci. But we don't have to be. The apostle Paul said, "It is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2). That means doing our best and leaving the results with God. Who knows, we may just surprise ourselves! — Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Give of your best to the Master,  
Give Him first place in your heart;  
Give Him first place in your service,  
Consecrate every part. —Grose

The greatest ability is dependability.

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## Judge Not!

Judge not, that you be not judged. —Matthew 7:1

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

When Jesus commanded, "Judge not," He was not implying that we should be naïve or imprudent. Of course we need to think critically and analytically in this world where we are often confronted with error and wrongdoing. Instead, He meant that we should not be condemning or accusing, a point Paul made eloquently: "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts" (1 Cor. 4:5).

Poet Robert Burns made a similar point, writing of those whose actions are in doubt: "One point must still be greatly dark—the [motive]. Why they do it." No one knows another's motives. God alone can bring to light what is hidden in darkness; He alone can expose the intentions of the heart.

Jesus knows the latent forces that motivate others: the cruel beginnings, the fear, the disappointment, the broken heart, the sin that is resisted. Moreover, He is working in every submissive heart to bring it to maturity. Thus in the end—quite often contrary to our expectations—He will bring praise to those He has brought to completion.

The Lord alone can try the heart. Until He returns, let's ask Him to help us examine our own.: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"Condemn not, judge not"—not to man  
Is given his brother's faults to scan;  
One task is yours, and one alone—  
To search out and subdue your own. —Elliott

Be slow to judge others, but quick to judge yourself.

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## Home At Last

Each one's praise will come from God. —1 Corinthians 4:5

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

An elderly missionary couple who had served God for 50 years in a remote African village returned to the United States for a well-earned retirement. When they arrived, however, no one was there to greet them because of some confusion at the mission office. They had no one to help them with their suitcases and trunks, and no one to move them into their home. The old gentleman complained to his wife, "We've come home after all these years and there's no one who cares."

The man's bitterness grew as they settled into their new home. His wife, a bit fed up with his complaining, suggested that he take up the matter with God. So the man went to his bedroom and spent time in prayer. When he came out he had a new look on his face, which prompted his wife to ask what had happened.

"Well," he replied, "I told God that I've come home and no one cares." "And what did God say?" she asked. "He said, 'You're not home yet.'"

You too may serve for years in a place where no one notices you or cares what you've done. But God sees and cares. One day, when we reach our eternal home, "each one's praise will come from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5). In the meantime, let's be faithful (v.2).  
By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Think not your work of no account  
Although it may be small;  
The Lord marks well your faithfulness—  
He knows you gave your all. —D. De Haan

The world rewards success; God rewards faithfulness!

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## Our Desire for Praise

Many believed in Him, but . . . they did not confess Him, . . . for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. —John 12:42-43

Today's Scripture:: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

Children enjoy being commended by parents, teachers, and others in authority. I saw this recently on the faces of boys and girls who were being publicly honored for their accomplishments in a youth program.

Even adults like to receive the approval of people they respect. This built-in desire for praise is not wrong. Honest commendation can be very encouraging and can bring out the best in us. And the Bible tells us to look forward to the day when we will receive praise from God (1 Cor. 4:5). The problem, however, is that we often place more value on applause we receive from people in this life than on praise from God in the life to come.

A teenage boy is on drugs today because he wanted to be accepted by a group of his peers he considered "cool." Another young man admitted that he exaggerates about his relationship with girls because he thinks it makes him appear macho to the men with whom he works. Both of these fellows made the same mistake as those first-century believers who "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

Lord, help us to take the long-range view and want Your praise more than the praise of people. By: Herbert Vander Lugt [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

May everything we do  
By word or deed or story  
Be done to please the Lord—  
To Him be all the glory. —Roworth

Living for God's approval is better than living for man's applause.

**1 Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.**

Amplified - Now I have applied all this [about parties and factions] to myself and Apollos for your sakes, brethren, so that from what I have said of us [as illustrations], you may learn [to think of men in accordance with Scripture and] not to go beyond that which is written, that none of you may be puffed up and inflated with pride and boast in favor of one [minister and teacher] against another.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied these things to myself and Apollos because of you, brothers and sisters, so that through us you may learn "not to go beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of the one against the other.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:6 Dear brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself to illustrate what I've been saying. If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures, you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:6 Now, brothers, 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 take pride in one man over against another.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:6 Τα τα δ , δελφο , μετσεχημ πισα ες μαυτ ν κα πολλ ν δι μ ς , να ν μ ν μ θητε τ Μ π ρ γ γραπται , να μ ε ς π ρ το ν ς φυσιο σθε κατ το τ ρου .

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:6 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:6 And these things, brethren, I did transfer to myself and to Apollos because of you, that in us ye may learn not to think above that which hath been written, that ye may not be puffed up one for one against the other,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up

for the one against the other.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the saying: "Nothing beyond what is written." The purpose is that none of you will be inflated with pride in favor of one person over another.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written, so that none of you will be inflated with pride in favor of one person over against another.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:6 I have applied all this to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that you can learn how the saying, 'Nothing beyond what is written' is true of us: no individual among you must become filled with his own importance and make comparisons, to another's detriment.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:6 Brothers and sisters, I have applied this to Apollos and myself for your sake. You should learn from us not to go beyond what is written in Scripture. Then you won't arrogantly place one of us in opposition to the other.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:6 My brothers, it is because of you that I have taken Apollos and myself as examples of these things, so that in us you might see that it is not wise to go farther than what is in the holy Writings, so that no one of you may be lifted up against his brother.

- **these things:** 1Co 1:12 3:4-7 2Co 10:7,12,15 11:4,12-15
- **for:** 1Co 9:23 2Co 4:15 12:19 1Th 1:5 2Ti 2:10
- **that you:** Job 11:11,12 Ps 8:4 146:3 Isa 2:22 Jer 17:5,6 Mt 23:8-10 Ro 12:3 2Co 12:6
- **arrogant** 1Co 4:18,19 3:21 5:2,6 8:1 13:4 Nu 11:28,29 Joh 3:26,27 Col 2:18

## **THE ROOT CAUSE OF THEIR FACTIONALISM - PRIDE**

**John MacArthur** writes "They were proud of their human wisdom and proud of their human leaders. It was that worldly, carnal pride that caused the serious divisions that plagued the church. Those leaders themselves were godly and humble servants of the Lord, and the Corinthians had much reason to be grateful for His having sent them such men. But instead of being grateful they were proud."

**Jack Arnold** introduces this next section - Benjamin Franklin said, "The proud hate pride -- in others." That was the exact problem of the Corinthian Christians. They were puffed up with pride which manifested itself in conceit. They were glorying in their preachers Paul, Apollos, Peter - rather than Christ. They were exalting their own human wisdom which fed their pride. They had become conceited because they actually believed they had arrived spiritually under the tutelage of their particular preacher-hero when in actuality they were babes in Christ who needed much spiritual growth. The irony was the Corinthians hated the pride they thought they saw in the Apostle Paul but could not see the glaring pride and conceit in their own lives. In 4:6-2 1, Paul will give a warning to these Corinthians concerning pride, self-sufficiency and complacency which was evident in their church. ([1 Corinthians 4:6-21 Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Now these things, brethren** ([adelphos](#)) - **These things** should always prompt a question, "what **things**?" This will invariably force you to examine the context (always a good practice!) But how far back do we go in the context in this case? The clue is that Paul says he had used "figures of speech" (**have figuratively applied**) to describe both himself and Apollos and this forces us to expand the search to more than just the preceding verse or two. In other words, if we go back to the previous chapter, we observe that Paul used three figures of speech of himself and Apollos (and he will use one more "figure" in 1 Cor 4:15+) -

(1) **Servants** ([diakonos](#)), those who perform the menial task of waiting on tables (1 Cor 3:5+);

(2) **Planter/waterer** (picture of farmers) (1 Cor 3:6-9+);

(3) **Builders**, Paul laying the foundation ([architekton](#)) and Apollos building on it ([epoikodomeo](#)) (1 Cor 3:10-

14+). Then in chapter 4 Paul added two more figures of speech -

(4) **Servants** ([huperetes](#)) - under-rowers (1 Cor 4:1+) and

(5) **Stewards** ([oikonomos](#)) - slave who was responsible for managing a man's property or household and for distributing their wages, food, etc to its members. (1 Cor 4:2+) As an aside this would make a great sermon as it is a beautiful description of pastor, and by application a wonderful template for all God's children to seek to follow by His Spirit and for His glory. Amen!

(6) **Father** ([pater](#)) - the "spiritual father" of the Corinthians - see 1 Cor 4:15+

**I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes** - Paul is saying that the figures he used of servants and steward and applied to himself and Apollos were not to be taken literally, but figuratively. He used this mode of teaching to help the Corinthians understand better who he and Apollos were and what their role was. And if one looks at each figure of speech it is clear that Paul is combating the tendency of the Corinthians toward arrogance and boasting. If they saw themselves as God sees them -- as servants, under-rowers, stewards, builders -- this would serve to deflate their puffed up egos! And this also helps one apply Paul's following command to "**be imitators of me**," (1 Cor 4:16+), imitating my humble approach to ministry of the Gospel for the glory of the Lord. I am reminded of Paul's similar description in his second letter (It is one of my personal "go to" verses when my fallen flesh begins to boast in self after receiving a commendatory email from a user - I have to fight off pride by running for refuge in the following verse and also to Psalm 115:1)...

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider **ANYTHING** (WHO MUCH?) as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is **from God**, Who also **made** us adequate as **servants** ([diakonos](#)) **of a new covenant**, not of the letter but **of the Spirit**; for the letter kills, but **the Spirit gives life**. (2 Cor 3:5-6+)

**Jack Arnold** - Paul used himself and Apollos as examples or illustrations to demonstrate that all ministers are instruments in the band of God. Obviously the whole Corinthian church had divided up to follow their particular leader. What Paul has said and is about to say about himself and Apollos were designed to teach them lessons about humility.

#### Related Resource:

- Figures of speech - Importance of understanding how to interpret [terms of comparison](#)// [simile](#) // [metaphor](#)

**Brethren** (80) [adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) literally means brother referring to a physical brother or figuratively can refer to a brother in the spiritual sense.

**Adelphos** in the letters to the Corinthians (most in first epistle) - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 5:11; 1 Co. 6:5; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 6:8; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 7:24; 1 Co. 7:29; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 8:13; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 10:1; 1 Co. 11:33; 1 Co. 12:1; 1 Co. 14:6; 1 Co. 14:20; 1 Co. 14:26; 1 Co. 14:39; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:6; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:50; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:11; 1 Co. 16:12; 1 Co. 16:15; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 8:22; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 9:3; 2 Co. 9:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:11;

**Figuratively applied** (3345) [metaschematizo](#) from **metá** = exchange or change of place or condition + **schematízo** = to form <> from **schema** = shape, outward form or fashion, the form that is seen) means to change the outward form or appearance of something. To alter the outward appearance in such a way as to deceive or to feign to be what one is not (see uses in 2 Cor 11:13, 14, 15). The meaning in 1 Cor 4:6 is illustrating something with the help of a figure of speech. Used 5x in the NT - 1 Co. 4:6; 2 Co. 11:13; 2 Co. 11:14; 2 Co. 11:15; Phil. 3:21

**Ryrie** - I have figuratively applied. I.e., though Paul had been speaking of himself and Apollos (3:5-4:5), others, whom he did not name, were the real culprits. that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written. I.e., that you might learn by us to live faithfully according to the Scriptures.

**So that** (term of purpose) **in us you may learn** ([manthano](#)) **not to exceed what is written** - NLT = "If you pay attention to what I have quoted from the Scriptures," Amplified = "You may learn [to think of men in accordance with Scripture and] not to go beyond that which is written." Notice that the "[figures of speech](#)" were like "windows" into God's truth, and were given to help these infantile believers **learn** ([manthano](#)) some basic truths. This is a difficult passage. It may mean his purpose was to encourage them to think biblically.

**Vine on you may learn** - finding an object lesson in them, which they could readily apply to the actual conditions at Corinth.

**Vine on not to exceed what is written** - possibly referring to the Scriptures and perhaps especially to those which had already



been quoted (see 1 Cor 1:19, 31; 3:19, 20). It seems more likely, however, that the phrase is a technical one, taken from general usage, referring, in common parlance, to adherence to the terms of an agreement. Thus the warning would be not to go beyond the terms of the commission entrusted to a teacher.

**MacArthur** - God's faithful servants are to receive proper honor and respect. We are to "appreciate those who diligently labor among [us], and have charge over [us] in the Lord and give [us] instruction" (1 Thess. 5:12), and faithful elders should "be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). But they are to be honored only within such bounds of Scripture. Godly respect turns into ungodly exaltation when we exceed what is written. When loving gratitude and legitimate loyalty are contaminated with pride and conceit, Christ's church is fractured and weakened. What God intends as a means of unity Satan turns into a means of division

**Arnold** suggests that "it most likely implies that Paul, Apollos and Peter were an object lesson to the Corinthians that they were not to think of leaders above that which was written in the Old Testament where worldly wisdom is considered folly and all of God's ministers are called servants. We should never glory in God's leaders because God is a jealous God who will not share His glory with any mere man.

**So that** (term of purpose) **no one of you will become arrogant** ([phusioo](#) = "key word" - 1 Cor 4:18,19) **in behalf of one against the other - Amplified** - "that none of you may be puffed up and inflated with pride and boast in favor of one [minister and teacher] against another." **NLT** = "you won't be proud of one of your leaders at the expense of another." **MacArthur** explains what this is such a problem because "The meaning of pride basically is "I'm for me." When everyone is pulling first of all for himself, fellowship and harmony are torn apart in the process."

**Vine** - watchfulness is needed against the tendency toward the attachment to a particular leader in an assembly, whose natural qualifications and influence make a special appeal to certain minds, and the consequent formation of cliques. Nor should appreciation of one who has been the means of blessing to a person be allowed to develop into undue estimation of his gifts. To panegyryze a favorite leader of one's own choosing is to evince a high-flown self-conceit, and this is the point of the warning to the church members against being "puffed up" for special favorites.

**Arnold** - We learn here that the bottom line problem at Corinth was not the superficial things such as human reasoning and preacher worship, but that it was pride. The followers of Apollos exalted themselves over those of Paul and those of Paul over Peter. One brother not only thought himself superior to another but also assumed a hostile attitude towards him. They were full of pride and puffed up with conceit, each thinking he had the best leader; consequently, they looked down their noses at those who did not follow the same leader they did or those who did not act or think like they did. They reeked with conceit. The Corinthians were puffed up over preacher worship and they were also puffed up over spiritual gifts. First Corinthians 1:7 says, "Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift." They had all twenty-one of the spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament. They thought they had acted spiritually because they had a great deal of human knowledge and had experienced the mystical gift of tongues. They had all the gifts, yet they were a messed up church, filled with pride and rotten lives. This shows us that an active local church with exciting meetings and with all the spiritual gifts manifested is not necessarily a godly, committed, maturing body of Christians. It is possible for Christians to think they have arrived spiritually and don't need other people to teach them, encourage them, correct them or lead them. A Christian never completely arrives spiritually in this life no matter how far he has progressed in spiritual maturity. There is always room for growth. "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect (spiritually mature) but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me" (Phil 3:12). Christians can get proud over so many things. It may be the wealth of the church, the status people in the church, the strong teaching, a particular doctrinal emphasis, its missionary thrust, its type of worship or its size. Remember, pride goes before destruction. Pride is the root of divisions, conflicts and dissensions in the life of the local church and between believers in Christ.

**Knofel Staton** - We feed pride into our system when we continue to pump ourselves up with a bunch of self-centered hot air. Pride has several devastating results--all of which interfere with the fellowship into which God has called us. 1) Pride cuts ourselves off from God--for who needs God if we are self-sufficient within ourselves? 2) Pride cuts ourselves off from others, for who needs to be dependent upon others if in our pride we are independent? 3) Pride cuts ourselves off from ourselves, for it does not permit us to face accurately our own self-evaluation. 4) Pride cuts ourselves off from service. No wonder God hates pride. And no wonder we read that pride comes before a fall ([1 Corinthians](#)).

**1 Corinthians 4:7 For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?**

Amplified - For who separates you from the others [as a faction leader]? [Who makes you superior and sets

you apart from another, giving you the preeminence?] What have you that was not given to you? If then you received it [from someone], why do you boast as if you had not received [but had gained it by your own efforts]?

NET 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who concedes you any superiority? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not?

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:7 For what gives you the right to make such a judgment? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if everything you have is from God, why boast as though it were not a gift?

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

NIV 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?

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:7 τ ς γ ρ σε διακρ νει; τ ὀ χεις ο κ λαβεις; ε ὀ κα λαβεις, τ καυχσαι ς μ λαβ ν;

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:7 for who doth make thee to differ? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? and if thou didst also receive, why dost thou glory as not having received?

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who makes you so superior? What do you have that you didn't receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as if you hadn't received it?

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:7 Who confers distinction upon you? What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received it, why are you boasting as if you did not receive it?

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:7 Who made you so important? What have you got that was not given to you? And if it was given to you, why are you boasting as though it were your own?

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:7 Who says that you are any better than other people? What do you have that wasn't given to you? If you were given what you have, why are you bragging as if it weren't a gift?

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:7 For who made you better than your brother? or what have you that has not been given to you? but if it has been given to you, what cause have you for pride, as if it had not been given to you?

- who: 1Co 12:4-11 15:10 Ro 9:16-18 Eph 3:3-5 2Th 2:12-14 1Ti 1:12-15 Tit 3:3-7
- and what: 1Co 3:5 7:7 1Ch 29:11-16 2Ch 1:7-12 Pr 2:6 Mt 25:14,15 Lu 19:13 Joh 1:16 3:27 Ro 1:5 12:6 Jas 1:17 1Pe 4:10
- why: 1Co 5:6 2Ch 32:23-29 Eze 28:2-5 29:3 Da 4:30-32 5:18,23 Ac 12:22,23

### THREE SHARP QUESTIONS LIKE A PROSECUTING ATTORNEY!

Like a careful prosecuting attorney Paul will use 3 questions to expose their arrogance and pride, the first dealing with the attitude of superiority, the second with the attitude of ingratitude and the third the attitude of self-boasting. Paul could then "rest his case!" But unfortunately he knew the triad of question would not pierce their armor of arrogance and so under the Spirit's inspiration he was forced in the next 6 verses (1 Cor 4:8-13) to unleash a [soliloquy](#) of sarcasm.

I like the way **R C H Lenski** puts it - "The three questions asked are short ([pithy](#)) and have the intention of puncturing their bubble of pride and the further intention of bringing the Corinthians down to the level of true Christian humility. But they needed still more."

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation. Always begs question "What is being explained?"

**Guzik** - The puffed up state of the Corinthian Christians meant there was a pride problem. Though the pride was evident in the cliques around the different apostles, the cliques weren't the problem as much as pride was the problem. Paul addresses their proud

hearts with three questions.

**Who regards you as superior (diakrino -)?** - NIV = "For who makes you different from anyone else?" Amplified = " For who separates you from the others [as a faction leader]? [Who makes you superior and sets you apart from another, giving you the preeminence?]" In other words why do you think you are better than other believers? Or why do you think your faction is better than that of the other faction? Clearly, the intent of this question is to bring them down to earth so to speak, to force them to consider the truth that they are no better than other believers who are also in Christ! So why are you so "puffed up?" It makes no sense! **Guzik** says "If there is a difference between us, it is because of what God has done in us, so there is no reason for pride."

**Arnold** - Pride led these Corinthians to great conceit. They thought their little group was superior because they themselves were superior and were following a superior leader. Paul repressed their conceit by asking, "For who makes you different from anyone else? It is God who makes them different. Being different does not mean that one is superior to another.

**What do you have that you did not receive?** - Answer? Nothing. Not the air we breathe or the food we eat. Absolutely nothing! Is this not a humbling thought? And of course in the spiritual realm, the principle applies to their wonderful spiritual gifts. They are all just that...GIFTS, not "wages" for meritorious works or behavior! For what they had received from God review 1 Cor 1:3-9+. It is all from God for as James says "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." (James 1:17+, cf ; 1 Chr 29:11-16) This truth should squash our pride! This question parallels the truth in 1 Cor 4:2 that believers are all stewards of God, slaves who have been given eternal life and spiritual gifts, but all from God, through God and to God, to Him be the glory. Amen!

**Arnold** - Paul further repressed their conceit by showing everything a Christian or a minister has is by the grace of God; therefore, they have no grounds to think of themselves as superior to anyone. Furthermore, if they had any apparent superiority, it was not due to themselves but to God who gave them gifts and abilities. Absolutely everything we are and have is due to God's grace: There is no room for conceit in any Christian.

**Vine on do you have** - even supposing that such a superiority were actually possessed, it is not innate, but is derived from God, a fact which rules out self-glorying. For a recipient to boast as if he were himself the source of what was bestowed upon him is the height of self-conceit.

**And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?** - In other words why do you **boast** as if what you **received** (spiritual gift - cf "all speech and knowledge" in 1 Cor 1:5+) as if it were based on your accomplishment? Paul has already used the same verb for boast three times (1 Co. 1:29; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 3:21)

**MacArthur** - The whole foundation of their boasting was nothing more than a fabrication of their pride. Nothing is more self-deceitful than pride. We are inclined to believe almost anything about ourselves if it is favorable. But Paul would not allow the Corinthians to remain self-deceived. He stripped away every excuse and broke down every defense. He loved them too much to allow Satan to so mislead and misuse them. The apostle was so concerned, and so determined that they would understand the seriousness of their sin, that he drove home his point with pointed sarcasm (IN THE NEXT SECTION).

**Arnold** - Paul continued to repress their conceit by reminding them there is no room for boasting in a Christian because everything comes from the hand of a loving, sovereign God. Paul's point is clear. It is prideful conceit which causes conflicts and before we can solve conflicts with other Christians or heal divisions within a local church, we must first deal with our pride and conceit. Think about this for a moment. The first conflict in the universe was between God and Lucifer and the root was Lucifer's pride and conceit. The conflict between Cain and Abel, which was the first conflict in the world, was caused by pride and conceit. The conflict between David and King Saul started when Saul heard the women in the city say, "Saul has killed his thousands but David his tens of thousands," and the root was pride and conceit. These things lead to a superiority attitude and also to great jealousy when someone outshines us. The result is always conflict and division. ([1 Corinthians 4:6-21 Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**THOUGHT** - Guzik comments that Paul's " three questions should prompt other questions in my heart: do I truly give God the credit for my salvation (cf 1 Cor 1:31+)? Do I live with a spirit of humble gratitude (1 Th 5:18+)? Seeing that I have received from God, what can I give to Him? (ANSWER: NOTHING BUT MY LOVING OBEDIENCE!). Augustine used this text often in proclaiming the total depravity of man against the **Pelagians**. He knew that it taught there is nothing good in us except what we have received from God. (AMEN! SOUNDS LIKE PAUL IN Ro 7:18+)

**Boast** (exult, glory) ([2744](#))(**kauchaomai** akin to **aucheo** = boast + **euchomai** = pray to God <> **auchen** = neck which vain persons are apt to carry in proud manner) means to boast over a privilege or possession. The idea is to take pride in something. This verb was used in the Septuagint in the OT of any proud & exulting joy. Uses in the letters to the Corinthians (especially the **second** letter) - 1 Co. 1:29; 1 Co. 1:31; 1 Co. 3:21; 1 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 5:12; 2 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 9:2; 2 Co. 10:8; 2 Co. 10:13; 2 Co. 10:15; 2 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 10:17; 2 Co.

**William Seeker** - Reader, are there not the same lusts lodging in your heart--which are reigning in wicked men's lives? The reason why there is so little self-condemnation, is because there is so little self-examination. If we were left to ourselves but for a moment--we would destroy ourselves in that moment! We can defile ourselves--but we cannot cleanse ourselves. The sheep can go astray alone--but can never return to the fold, without the assistance of the shepherd. "Hold me up--and I shall be safe!" Psalm 119:117

**1 Corinthians 4:8 You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you.**

Amplified - You behave as if] you are already filled and think you have enough [you are full and content, feeling no need of anything more]! Already you have become rich [in spiritual gifts and graces]! [Without any counsel or instruction from us, in your conceit], you have ascended your thrones and come into your kingdom without including us! And would that it were true and that you did reign, so that we might be sharing the kingdom with you!

NET 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already you are satisfied! Already you are rich! You have become kings without us! I wish you had become kings so that we could reign with you!

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:8 You think you already have everything you need. You think you are already rich. You have begun to reign in God's kingdom without us! I wish you really were reigning already, for then we would be reigning with you.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have become kings--and that without us! How I wish that you really had become kings so that we might be kings with you!

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:8 ὁ ἡ κεκορεσμένοι ἐστέ, ὁ ἡ πλουτῶσατε, χωρὶς ἡμῶν βασιλεῦσατε· καὶ φελοῦν γε βασιλεῦσατε, νὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἡμῶν συμβασιλευσώμεν.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:8 Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already ye are having been filled, already ye were rich, apart from us ye did reign, and I would also ye did reign, that we also with you may reign together,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have come to reign without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have begun to reign as kings without us-- and I wish you did reign, so that we could also reign with you!

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:8 You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us-- and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you!

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:8 You are already satisfied; you have already grown rich; you have become kings without us! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we also might become kings with you.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:8 You already have everything -- you are rich already -- you have come into your kingdom, without any help from us! Well, I wish you were kings and we could be kings with you!

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:8 You already have what you want! You've already become rich! You've become kings without us! I wish you really were kings so that we could be kings with you.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:8 For even now you are full, even now you have wealth, you have been made kings without us: truly, I would be glad if you were kings, so that we might be kings with you.

- **You are already filled:** 1Co 1:5 3:1,2 5:6 Pr 13:7 25:14 Isa 5:21 Lu 1:51-53 6:25 Ro 12:3 Ro 12:16 Ga 6:3 Rev 3:17
- **you have become kings without us:** 1Co 4:18 Ac 20:29,30 Php 1:27 2:12

- **and indeed I:** Nu 11:29 Ac 26:29 2Co 11:1
- **you had:** Ps 122:5-9 Jer 28:6 Ro 12:15 2Co 13:9 1Th 2:19,20 3:6-9 2Ti 2:11,12 Rev 5:10

## BITING IRONY COMPARING CORINTHIANS TO APOSTLES

**Irony** - The use of words to express something different from and often opposite to their literal meaning. An expression or utterance marked by a deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning

**Sarcasm** - This is closely related to irony. A cutting, often ironic remark intended to express contempt or ridicule. While it is often used to hurt a person's feelings, in this context Paul is using this language to garner their attention, not to shame them, but to warn ([admonish](#)) them.

**Gilbrant** writes "Paul painted a darker picture with each stroke of his brush."

**Luther** - "Paul mocks them, for he means the opposite of what he says"

Vine - he now passes from the representative individual to the whole assembly (not merely to the party leaders,

**Arnold** - The whole section of 1 Cor 4:8-13 is filled with irony and sarcasm. Paul never watered down his words. He drew a contrast between the wretched state of the Apostles and that of the Corinthians in their ease. Pride and conceit does not lead to a spiritual church but to a self-sufficient, complacent church as seen in the Corinthians.

**Paul Apple** calls this six verse section of sarcasm "The Delusion of Self Sufficiency = A Wrong View of Their Own Condition -- They Wrongly Thought They Had Already Arrived. . Sarcasmic Parody of Their Self Sufficient Complacency - Laodicean Syndrome (Rev. 3:14-22+)

## SELF-SATISFIED

Self-satisfaction is actually a negative not a positive trait, for it effectively starves one from partaking of the blessing of those who "hunger and thirst for righteousness." (Mt 5:6+).

**You are already filled, you have already become rich - Amplified** - "You behave as if] you are already filled and think you have enough [you are full and content, feeling no need of anything more]! Already you have become rich [in spiritual gifts and graces]! [Without any counsel or instruction from us, in your conceit]" This is self-deception, for they were ignorant of their need thinking they needed nothing! Paul is mocking the arrogance of the Corinthians who thought they were satisfied and surfeited and thus had "spiritually arrived!" Who are you going to believe? Them or Paul? Paul is crystal clear -- not only had they not arrived, they were still walking in diapers 4-5 years later...

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? (1 Cor 3:1-3+)

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever met anyone who thought they had arrived and it was clear they were very immature? When a Christian becomes satisfied with their current state, they are potentially in a dangerous place. It is like riding a bicycle -- stop pedaling and you are cruising for a fall! The same is true in the spiritual life!

**MacArthur** - To unmask their conceit he heaps on feigned praise. He tells the Corinthian believers they are great and wonderful. They are satiated with every good thing; they are wealthy; they are royal. They had it all. They had arrived. Except for the context, the Corinthians probably would have taken Paul's words in verse 8 at face value. That is exactly what they thought of themselves.

**Arnold** - One of the obvious teachings in the New Testament is that the Christian spiritually and positionally possesses now which will be actually and factually his in the future kingdom. This is called "realized eschatology." It views everything from the "already but not yet" perspective. However, the Corinthians had an "over-realized eschatology." They thought they had arrived spiritually; they were in their opinion well on the way to perfection. They placed their emphasis on the already with little or no emphasis upon the not yet....Outwardly they lacked nothing; they felt no want. They were very secure and self-sufficient and self-satisfied because in their conceit they thought they had it made. They perceived themselves as mature and godly when in actuality they were immature baby Christians and ungodly. Their own pride blinded them to their true spiritual condition. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Are filled** :[\(2880\)](#)([korenumi](#)) means satiate, fill, to be content. In passive means get enough of, be satisfied



with, have all one wants of something. BDAG = "you already have eaten your fill, i.e., you think you already have all the spiritual food you need (1 Cor 4:8). Only here and Acts 27:38 (not in Lxx). Gilbrant adds "In classical usage *koronnumi* means "to satiate"; in the passive voice it means "to have one's fill" or "to overeat." The term is related to *koros*, a noun not found in Scripture, that means "satiety." This set of words is used mainly in reference to eating. Acts 27:38 uses it when, after a 2-week fast during a storm, the 276 passengers sailing for Rome followed Paul's example and "ate their fill" before throwing the wheat overboard to lighten the ship. Paul used the word figuratively when he said to the Corinthians that they were "full," acting as if they did not need any more spiritual food (1 Corinthians 4:8). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary) Only 2 uses in NT - Acts 27:38; 1 Co. 4:8 and none in the Septuagint.

**Become rich** (4147) (**plouteo** from **ploutos** = wealth) means to be or become rich or wealthy (Lk 1:53, 1 Ti 6:9) and is used figuratively of spiritual riches (cp Lk 12:21, Rev 3:18+ and literally in Rev 3:17+) 12x - abounding in riches(1), become rich(4), become wealthy(1), get rich(1), rich(5). Lk 1:53, 12:21, Ro 10:12, 1Co 4:8, 2 Co 8:9, 1 Ti 6:9, 18, Rev 3:17+, Rev 3:18+, Rev 18:3+, Rev 18:15+, Rev 18:19+

**You have become kings without us** - Amplified = "you have ascended your thrones and come into your kingdom without including us!" **Paul Apple** says they were in effect "Reigning in their own myopic millennium - deceived regarding their standing in the kingdom!" To what does this refer? We know that when we are glorified there will be a dispensing of crowns to many saints ([What are the five heavenly crowns that believers can receive in Heaven?](#)). **MacArthur** adds "They already considered themselves to be reigning, as if their own Millennium had begun."

**And indeed, I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you** - Amplified = "And would that it were true and that you did reign, so that we might be sharing the kingdom with you!" Here Paul is being sincere, not sarcastic. He like all believers should do, lived with a "**Maranatha Mindset**," ever looking eagerly, longingly for the return of the King and the establishment of His righteous earthly **Millennial Kingdom**. And so Paul wishes they were actually reigning, for it would mean he and the other apostles would be reigning in Christ's Kingdom (cf Rev 5:10+). Their apostolic work would have been completed, their Gospel mission accomplished.

**Arnold** - These Corinthians were so filled with conceit they acted like they were kings already reigning with Christ in the future kingdom. They really thought themselves and the church to be something special. They thought they had arrived spiritually. They had it made. They thought they had learned all truth and there was nothing Paul or anyone else could teach them that they didn't know already. They had no need for other ministers or believers to teach them because they were so far advanced in their knowledge and spirituality. They were the "without us" crowd. They had no need for the body of Christ, for ministers or for anyone. Their attitude was, "Who needs you?" Their conceit led them to a fierce independent spirit so as to make them free-lance Christians. Their pride, conceit, arrogance and vanity over being superior Christians was nauseating to God and it ruined their testimony before men. Paul said that he wished they were kings reigning in the future kingdom. If they were, then he and the other apostles would not have to endure all the sufferings for Christ they were then undergoing, for they would all be reigning together as perfected Christians. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**1 Corinthians 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.**

Amplified - For it seems to me that God has made an exhibit of us apostles, exposing us to view last [of all, like men in a triumphal procession who are] sentenced to death [and displayed at the end of the line]. For we have become a spectacle to the world [a show in the world's amphitheater] with both men and angels [as spectators].

NET 1 Corinthians 4:9 For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to die, because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to people.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:9 Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world-- to people and angels alike.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe,



to angels as well as to men.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:9 δοκ γ ρ, θε ς μ ς το ς ποστ λους σχ τους π δειξεν ς πιθανατ ους, τι θ ατρον γεν θημεν τ κ σμ κα γγ λους κα νθρ ποις.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:9 for I think that God did set forth us the apostles last -- as appointed to death, because a spectacle we became to the world, and messengers, and men;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:9 For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and men.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think God has displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: We have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:9 For as I see it, God has exhibited us apostles as the last of all, like people sentenced to death, since we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and human beings alike.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on show right at the end, like men condemned to death: we have been exhibited as a spectacle to the whole universe, both angelic and human.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:9 As I see it, God has placed us apostles last in line, like people condemned to die. We have become a spectacle for people and angels to look at.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:9 For it seems to me that God has put us the Apostles last of all, as men whose fate is death: for we are put on view to the world, and to angels, and to men.

- **I think** : 1Co 15:30-32 2Co 1:8-10 4:8-12 6:9 Php 1:29,30 1Th 3:3
- **as**: Ps 44:22 Ro 8:36 1Th 5:9,10 Rev 6:9-11
- **we are**: Heb 10:33 11:36
- **spectacle**: Gr. theatre, Ac 19:29,31
- **and to men**: Heb 1:14 Rev 7:11-14 17:6,7

## LIKE MEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation. Always begs question "What is being explained?"

**I think** ([dokeo](#) - suppose), **God has exhibited** ([apodeiknumi](#)) **us apostles** ([apostolos](#)) **last** ([eschatos](#)) **of all, as men condemned to death** - Gladiatorial games were held in Corinth as well as Rome and many think that Paul is alluding to these in making the statement that the apostles were **men condemned to death**.

**W E Vine** states that [apodeiknumi](#) as used in this passage was a technical term for the exhibition of the gladiators." It was a technical word to describe the bringing of a person into the arena, condemned to die as criminals. Here the apostles were brought out to make the grand finale, who were the last ones brought out for the final slaughter before the bloodthirsty crowds!

**John MacArthur** adds that this "imagery is of condemned prisoners brought into a Roman arena to fight and die; the last ones brought out for slaughter were the grand finale. In His sovereign wisdom and for His ultimate glory, God chose to display the apostles figuratively before men and angels during the present age as just such worthless and condemned spectacles (cf. Mt 19:28). Like doomed gladiators, they were ridiculed, spit on, imprisoned, and beaten; yet, God glorified His name through them as He used them to build His kingdom." (MacArthur Study Bible)

**Condemned to death** (doomed to die, sentenced to death) ([1935](#))([epithanatos](#) from [epi](#) = to, upon + [thanatos](#) = death) was used of criminals sentenced to death in the arena. This phrase is a single "word in Greek, the adjective [epithanatos](#) (only here in NT). In the apocryphal additions to the Book of Daniel it is used in the story of [Bel and the Dragon](#) to describe "condemned conspirators who were thrown to the lions, two at a time, daily . . . Dionysius of Halicarnasus, about B.c. 8, uses it of those who were thrown from the

Tarpeian rock" (ibid.). Lightfoot suggests that the adjective should be translated "condemned criminals." Moffatt renders the clause: "Like doomed gladiators in the arena." That seems to catch the picture here." (Ralph Earle - Word Studies in the NT) **Gilbrant** adds that "**Epithanatos** is derived from the root word **thanatos** which refers to the act of dying or the state of death. It is also used of mortal danger, the manner of death, and the death penalty. **Epithanatos** occurs only once in the New Testament, in 1 Corinthians 4:9, where Paul claimed that apostles are on public display—like men "appointed to death" in the arena." (Complete Biblical Library)

**Wayne Barber** says **epithanatos** "has to do with people who were put on trial, found guilty and were then condemned to death. They were the lowest dregs of society. The illustration there is when a Roman general would go out into battle, he would bring back his captives. He would bring back the generals whom he had captured, chained to his chariot. Then they would have the prisoners behind him. These men would be condemned to death, to be put into an arena where they were slaughtered and the people would all come and rejoice and enjoy what was going on. That was the lowest of the low, to be condemned unto death.

**Arnold** - Paul began to subtly embarrass the Corinthians about their conceit by giving an account of the Apostles' experiences which were filled with humble acts. By showing these humble acts, Paul implied the Corinthians had fallen into a state of complacency, indifference and apathy because of their conceit. The Apostles were men condemned to death, a spectacle, on exhibition. The imagery behind this would have been a common sight to anyone living in the Roman Empire. It is the picture of a conquering Roman Caesar or general. As he returns from a victorious battle, he arrives at the palace in triumphant procession. Citizens line the roadway and archway leading to the palace. There are garlands, the tossing of flowers and money, and shouts of praise and acclamation as the returning general comes home. Behind the general in this parade are the proud soldiers who participated in the battle and last in the procession are the prisoners who were made captive in the conflict and who were condemned to certain death before Caesar and the public. As these prisoners moved along, bound in chains and dressed in rags, the people jeered, mocked and harassed them by spitting on them, punching them and throwing garbage or whatever on them. It was a humiliating experience because some of the prisoners may have been generals, officers or dignitaries in the defeated army. These captives would be put to death in a Roman arena either as a gladiator or thrown to the lions. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Has exhibited** (displayed)(584)(**apodeiknumi** from **apo** + **deiknumi** = to point out, cause to see) means to cause something to be known as genuine, to cause it to become displayed in a manner accessible to or observable by the public. Only 4 uses in NT - Acts 2:22; Acts 25:7; 1 Co. 4:9; 2 Th 2:4

**because we have become a spectacle to the world (kosmos), both to angels (aggelos/angelos) and to men** - The apostles were like acts on stage (or victims in a gladiatorial arena as others interpret this picture) for all to see whether the spectators were human or superhuman. The angels do watch what is transpiring on earth as they have in a sense a "vested interest" the writer of Hebrew rhetorically asking "Are they (ANGELS) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?." (Heb 1:14+) "Paul uses this picture to illustrate the humility and indignity to which the apostles are subjected. God is the one who set up this spectacle and uses the weakness of His servants in order to demonstrate His power and strength (New Linguistic Key)

**Cornerstone Bible Commentary** on **spectacle** - This word refers literally to a theater, as it does in its only other appearances in the NT (Acts 19:29–31). It can also refer to the spectators or, as here, to the actual show. The word choice indicates that Paul was playing off the gruesome type of display shown in the gladiatorial arena of victims mauled to death by animals or slaughtered at the end of a victory parade.

**Spectacle** (2302)(**theatron** from **theomai** = to behold) means theater, a place where drama and other public spectacles were exhibited and where crowds would come together to hear debates. It refers to the act of presenting something to sight or view and understood as a presentation for the stage. The synonymous verb **theo** is from the noun **theoros** which means a spectator who looks at thing with interest and purpose, carefully observing the details. **Theoro** means to give rapt contemplation of a vision and denotes calm, intent, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. Both **theomai** and **theo** imply deliberate contemplation, but the former is gazing with a view to satisfy the eye, while the latter is beholding more critically, with an inward spiritual or mental interest in the thing beheld, and with a view to acquire knowledge about it. **Theoreo** would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army; **theomai** of a lay spectator looking at the parade. Used 3x in NT - Acts 19:29; Acts 19:31; 1 Co. 4:9 with no uses in the Septuagint.

**Louw-Nida** on **theatron** - 1. **amphitheater**, here, a large theatre seating likely a little less than 25,000 when packed seating, with standing room packed, with a versatile stage area (Ac 19:29, 31); 2. **spectacle**, as if put on stage, front and center, in a universal amphitheater (1Co 4:9)

**Zodhiates** on **theatron** - Theater, a place where drama and other public spectacles were exhibited and where

the people convened to hear debates or hold public consultations (Acts 19:29, 31). Figuratively, a spectacle, public show (1 Cor. 4:9)

**Arnold** - Paul looked at himself and all the Apostles as men condemned to die with all comforts and rights denied them. The word "spectacle" is from the word from which we get our English word "theater." The Apostles were on exhibition as if on a vast stage before the unsaved world and viewed as stupid men, suffering for a fairy-tale cause. Because the Apostles were condemned men, they had a different view of life. A condemned man doesn't really care who wins the Super Bowl or whether the President is a Republican or Democrat. Nor does he care about material things. A man sentenced to death is interested in relationships, making sure everything is right with his fellow man. He is concerned about eternity and how he will face death. He wants to make every moment count with his loved ones. Paul and all the Apostles lived in the reality of life, not dealing with trivial things, but putting their time on spiritual things which count for eternity. The Apostles were the least, the last and the most afflicted of men. The Corinthians were displaying an attitude of being the first, the most and living out their Christian lives with ease. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**MacArthur** - Verses 9-13 can be summarized by four words: spectacles, fools, sufferers, and scum. Those words describe Paul's condition in contrast to what the Corinthians considered their condition to be. They thought they had everything in themselves; he knew he had nothing in himself...During the millennial kingdom the twelve apostles will reign with Christ on earth. They will "sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt. 19:28). But when they ministered on earth they did anything but rule. They became a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. They were ridiculed, spit upon, imprisoned, beaten, mocked, and generally treated like criminals. Then they were last; but in Christ's coming kingdom they will be first.

**Morris** - spectacle. This word is better translated "theater." In its only other occurrence in the New Testament, this word is also translated as such (Acts 19:29,31). It is sobering, as well as amazing, to realize that Christians--especially Christian leaders such as Paul and the apostles--are on a stage, as it were, being carefully watched by an audience that even includes the angels (compare Ephesians 3:10; 1 Corinthians 11:10; 1 Peter 1:12).

**Ryrie** - spectacle. Lit., a theater, referring either to gladiator contests or to a triumphal procession of a Roman general bringing captured soldiers to the arena. Likewise, the apostles in the arena of this world were fighting to the death.

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#### **H A Ironside - Illustrations of Bible Truth - I Cor. 4:9 The Lord's Spectacles**

One of the students of the Southern Bible Training School of Dallas, Texas, was praying and besought the Lord as follows: "O Lord, please keep your spectacles clean so that sinners can see you through us, 'cause you know, Lord, we are your spectacles." He did not know that the original word "**theatron**" means a show or display, but supposed it referred to eyeglasses. How we all need to remember that unsaved men can only see Christ through us; and if our lives are unclean, the vision of the Saviour will be blurred!

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#### **Oswald Chambers - The recognized ban of relationship**

We are made as the filth of the world. 1 Cor. 4:9-13 .

These words are not an exaggeration. The reason they are not true of us who call ourselves ministers of the gospel is not that Paul forgot the exact truth in using them, but that we have too many discreet affinities to allow ourselves to be made refuse. "Filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" is not an evidence of sanctification, but of being "separated unto the gospel."

"Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you," says Peter. If we do think it strange concerning the things we meet with, it is because we are craven-hearted. We have discreet affinities that keep us out of the mire—"I won't stoop; I won't bend." You do not need to, you can be saved by the skin of your teeth if you like; you can refuse to let God count you as one separated unto the gospel. Or you may say—"I do not care if I am treated as the offscouring of the earth as long as the Gospel is proclaimed." A servant of Jesus Christ is one who is willing to go to martyrdom for the reality of the gospel of God. When a merely moral man or woman comes in contact with baseness and immorality and treachery, the recoil is so desperately offensive to human goodness that the heart shuts up in despair. The marvel of the Redemptive Reality of God is that the worst and the vilest can never get to the bottom of His love. Paul did not say that God separated him to show what a wonderful man He could make of him, but "to reveal his son in me."

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**1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.**

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Amplified We are [looked upon as] fools on account of Christ and for His sake, but you are [supposedly] so amazingly wise and prudent in Christ! We are weak, but you are [so very] strong! You are highly esteemed, but

we are in disrepute and contempt

NET 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, we are dishonored!

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:10 Our dedication to Christ makes us look like fools, but you claim to be so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are so powerful! You are honored, but we are ridiculed.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

NIV 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!

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:10 με ς μωρο δι Χριστ ν, με ς δ φρ νιμοι ν Χριστ · με ς σθενε ς, με ς δ σχυρο · με ς νδοξοι, με ς δ τιμοι.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:10 we are fools because of Christ, and ye wise in Christ; we are ailing, and ye strong; ye glorious, and we dishonoured;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonor.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:10 We are fools on Christ's account, but you are wise in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are held in honor, but we in disrepute.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:10 Here we are, fools for Christ's sake, while you are the clever ones in Christ; we are weak, while you are strong; you are honoured, while we are d

- **are fools:** 1Co 1:1-3,18-20,26-28 2:3,14 3:18 2Ki 9:11 Ho 9:7 Ac 17:18,32 Ac 26:24
- **for:** Mt 5:11 10:22-25 24:9 Lu 6:22 Ac 9:16 1Pe 4:14
- **you are prudent:** 1Co 4:8 10:14,15 Jer 8:8,9
- **we are weak:** 1Co 2:3 2Co 10:10 11:29 12:9,10 13:3,4,9
- **but you are strong:** 1Co 3:2 10:12
- **but we:** Pr 11:12 Isa 53:3 Lu 10:16 18:9 1Th 4:8

## FOOLS FOR CHRIST

**We are fools** ([moros](#)) **for Christ's sake, but you are prudent** ([phronimos](#) - sensible, smart) **in Christ** - Amplified = "We are [looked upon as] fools on account of Christ and for His sake, but you are [supposedly] so amazingly wise and prudent in Christ!" See related comments on 1 Cor 3:18 where true wisdom is becoming fools for Christ's sake. Here Paul with stinging sarcasm says he (and those with him) were the **fools** ([moros](#) = dull, stupid, foolish, ridiculous), while the Corinthians who claimed to have worldly wisdom (philosophy) were actually the prudent or wise. One wonders if the readers felt the sting?

**Arnold** - To serve Christ, the Apostles had to be willing to be called fools by the world. Their devotion for Christ caused the world to think of them as odd and strange. The Corinthians thought they were wise, but they were actually ignorant and spiritually pitiful. No Christian who lives for Christ will ever get along with the world. He will always be unpopular with some crowds. A true Christian will have people laugh, ridicule, sneer and mock at times. No Christian likes to suffer for Christ, but it constitutes the great test of life: whether we are willing to bear reproach for Christ and His kingdom. It is possible for any Christian or church to do exactly what the Corinthians did -- compromise, accommodate, sell out so the world will respect the Christian and not laugh at him any more. When a Christian is highly respected and honored by the world, then he has lost his testimony to the world. Often the most brilliant Christian will be looked upon as the village idiot by his unsaved colleagues. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

How important it is for God's people to be "wise fools" who are willing to be called "fools for Christ's sake" so that He will receive all the glory.

-- Warren Wiersbe

**Vance Havner - Fools for Christ** - This world has always been moved, not by cold, calculating brass hats but by fools with their facts on fire; fools to their own generation, who perhaps did not know as much as some others but who were consumed by what they knew. And God is looking for "fools for Christ's sake" who are sure of a few great facts and with those facts on fire.

**James Smith** - If a Christian is not in the eyes of the world an anomaly he is nothing. The Spirit of God always makes a tremendous distinction between men. "Ye are a peculiar people." The energy of the natural man, and that of the Holy Spirit in the believer, are as different as darkness is from light; as far apart in character as Judas was from John....When God makes His choice of weapons they are always weak and base in the sight of the wisdom of this world (1 Cor. 1:27, 28). Fools for Christ. (Read his full discussion of [Gideon's Victory](#) where the numbers of warriors and weapons are "foolish" to the natural, logical man -[scroll down to middle of the page](#)).

In another comment on fools for Christ, **Smith** writes "Those who are fools for Christ have a business, and pleasures, and prospects, that Christless eyes have never seen. Fools, because they hold lightly the material, and grasp with firm hand the eternal. The things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man (1 Cor. 2:14). To die to live, is wiser than to die to be lost. (from [For Christ's Sake](#))

We are not much use in the Lord's service until we are willing to become **fools for Christ**.

|It is ours to obey and to trust. Opinions formed apart from the light of God's Word will sooner or later bring the blush of confusion to your face.

--- James Smith

**Fools** (3474) (**moros** conveys the root meaning of one who is mentally dull, sluggish in understanding, foolish, morally worthless, useless, silly or stupid (English = "moron"). Absurd (ridiculously unreasonable, unsound, or incongruous). All 12 NT uses - Matt. 5:22; Matt. 7:26; Matt. 23:17; Matt. 25:2; Matt. 25:3; Matt. 25:8; 1 Co. 1:25; 1 Co. 1:27; 1 Co. 3:18; 1 Co. 4:10; 2 Ti 2:23; Titus 3:9. Jesus used **moros** giving us a good description of foolish when he declared "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish (**moros**) man who built his house on the sand." (Mt 7:26+) That is foolish!

**Prudent** (wise, shrewd) (5429) (**phronimos** from **phronéo** = think, have a mindset related to **phren** = diaphragm, regarded by ancients as seat of mental and spiritual activity, came to mean mind or understanding) is an adjective which describes one who is thoughtful, sagacious or discreet. It describes the quality of one's thinking which is the result of insight and stands in opposition to moros which means foolish. The idea is that there is understanding combined with wisdom and insight. **Phronimos** implies a cautious, sensible, prudent character and in [Mt 10:16](#) refers to one as "shrewd" as a serpent. One who is **shrewd** has clever discerning awareness, acute perception and sharp powers of judgment. **Phronimos** also includes the ideas of one who is prudent, sensible and practically wise in relationships with others. There is a type of phronimos that is desirable (eg, here in [Mt 7:24](#), [10:16](#), et al) and a type that is not desirable ([Ro 11:26](#), [12:16](#)) this latter describing the person who relies on th

**We are weak, but you are strong** - This contrast could not have been more marked in truth it was actually the opposite of what Paul states. The reason of course is that the weakness of the apostles paradoxically led to their experiencing of power from Christ (see passage below), while the strength of the Corinthians was fleshly and they were in effect spiritually impotent! And thus in the very thing in which they were boasting (their spiritually exalted state) they were boasting, the irony is that they were in effect absolutely powerless! As Paul said

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power (**dunamis**) is perfected in **weakness** (**astheneia**)." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my **weaknesses** (**astheneia**),, so that the **power** (**dunamis**) of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with **weaknesses** (**astheneia**), with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for **when I am weak** (**astheneo**), **then I am strong**. (**dunatos**) (2 Cor 12:9, 10+)

**Arnold** - The Apostles were weak and in constant need of fellowship with Christ and the body of Christ, but the Corinthians thought themselves strong, needing nothing and no one. They were "Lone Ranger" Christians. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Weak** (sick, helpless) (772) (**asthenes** from a = without + sthenos = strength, bodily vigor) (See study of related verb astheneo - note the concentration of asthenes/astheneo in the epistles to the Corinthians - almost



50% of NT uses) is literally without strength or bodily vigor. **Asthenes** describes one's state of limited capacity to do or be something and is used literally of physical weakness (most of the uses in the Gospels) and figuratively of weakness in the spiritual arena (weak flesh, weak conscience, weak religious system or commandment [Gal 4:9, Heb 7:18], etc) and thus powerlessness to produce results.

**Strong** (loud, mighty, severe, strong man) (2478)(**ischuros** from **ischuo** = to be able) is an adjective which means strong, powerful, mighty (usually referring to inherent physical strength), able, forcible. Strong, having moral power. Inherently strong. Ischuros denotes power or ability and places "stress on the actual power that one possesses rather than on the mere principle of power. **People** - spoken of the powers both of body and mind, physical and moral .

**You are distinguished (endoxos), but we are without honor** - Amplified = "You are highly esteemed, but we are in disrepute and contempt." He says they are honored, distinguished, eminent. Perhaps this was true when they gazed in the mirror, but not when their heart was examined by the piercing gaze of God (Pr 15:3). Again the contrast is a paradox, for the apostles were dishonored by men but greatly esteemed by God, for "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6+). See [Spiritual Paradox in the Christian Life](#)

**Arnold** - The Corinthians were objects of honor and praise in the eyes of the world; the Apostles were held in utter contempt. Christians compromise the faith not because of intellectual problems but because they want respectability in the eyes of the world. Behind most compromise is the unwillingness to be laughed at by the world. Christians cannot get it through their thick skulls that to be a follower of Christ means persecution from the world. Sharing in Christ's suffering becomes a major way Christians share in Christ's glory. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Distinguished** (1741)(**endoxos** from **en** = in + **doxa** = glory) means (1) held in high esteem, honored, of high repute, distinguished, eminent as in 1Co 4:10; Lxx - Gen 34:19, 1 Sa. 9:6; 22:14; Isa. 23:8. (2) BDAG says **endoxos** pertains to "possessing an inherent quality that is not ordinary" and thus glorious or splendid. Of the church, brilliant in purity Eph 5:27 (figuratively free from sin). Of splendid deeds Lk 13:17 (cp Lxx. Ex 34:10; Job 5:9; 9:10; 34:24) **Endoxos** describes clothing which is splendid, fine (Lk 7:25). (3) Finally, **endoxos** speaks of spiritual excellence, that which is glorious, splendid, wonderful (Eph 5:27) including wonderful things, splendid deeds (Lk 13:17; Dt 10:21 = awesome things)

**Liddell-Scott** - (1) held in esteem or honour, of high repute, (2) of things - notable.

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek endoxos means "to be honored or esteemed" in the opinions of others. Men held in such high esteem were thought to be "extraordinary" or "magnificent." The Septuagint uses endoxos to refer to honorable men. Most often, however, it relates to the "glorious things" God promised Moses that He would do for His covenant people (cf. Exodus 34:10). In doing so His name would be "glorified" (Isaiah 60:9). Endoxos occurs in the New Testament only four times. Luke used **endoxos** to describe clothes. "Behold, those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are found in royal palaces" (Luke 7:25, NASB). The word relates to "gorgeously" splendid clothes which were made for the elite. Luke also used the word to refer to the glorious acts of Jesus (Luke 13:17). Paul referred to the Corinthians as "honorable" or "illustrious" when contrasting them with the apostle's condition in 1 Corinthians 4:10. Paul also used the same word to describe the "glorious" estate of the Church in Ephesians 5:27. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Endoxos** - 4x - in all...glory(1), distinguished(1), glorious things(1), splendidly(1). Lk. 7:25+ = "Those who are **splendidly** clothed" Lk. 13:17+ = "the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the **glorious things** being done by Him; 1 Co. 4:10; Eph. 5:27+ = church in **all her glory**."

**Endoxos** in Lxx - Gen. 34:19; Exod. 34:10; Num. 23:21; Deut. 10:21; Jos. 4:4; Jdg. 18:21; 1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Sam. 18:23; 1 Sam. 22:14; 2 Sam. 23:19; 2 Sam. 23:23; 1 Chr. 4:9; 1 Chr. 11:21; 1 Chr. 11:25; 2 Chr. 2:9; 2 Chr. 36:14; Est. 1:1; Est. 1:3; Est. 6:9; Job 5:9; Job 9:10; Job 34:24; Ps. 149:8; Prov. 25:27; Isa. 5:14; Isa. 10:33; Isa. 12:4; Isa. 13:19; Isa. 22:18; Isa. 22:24; Isa. 23:8; Isa. 23:9; Isa. 24:15; Isa. 26:15; Isa. 32:2; Isa. 48:9; Isa. 59:19; Isa. 60:9; Isa. 64:3; Isa. 64:11; Dan. 5:31; Dan. 6:3; Nah. 3:10;

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**Fools for Christ** - An article appeared in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution (April 10, 1996, A12) titled "Stand Up for Faith, Scalia Says." The article reported the recent speech delivered by Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia to an event sponsored by the Christian Legal Society at the Mississippi College School of Law. He said that Christians must proclaim their belief in miracles and ignore the scorn of the "worldly wise." He went on to say that the modern world dismisses Christians as fools for holding to their traditional beliefs, "We are fools for Christ," he said "We must pray for the courage to endure the scorn of the sophisticated world."

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**ILLUSTRATION** - I heard Professor W. O. Lappin tell about the man walking down State Street in Chicago wearing a sign board. On the front it read, "I am a fool for Christ's sake." Those who turned to look saw that the back of the sign read, "whose fool are you?"

I visited with a young Christian woman taking graduate work in psychology. She sounded dismayed when she said, "anyone who holds to Christian ethics is now considered abnormal." I thought, "The Christian is nearly always considered abnormal."

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### **The Story of a Fool for Christ [Karl F.A. Gutzlaff](#) (1803-1851) Disgraced idealist**

One historian described him as, variously, "a saint, a crank, a visionary, a true pioneer, and a deluded fanatic." [Karl Gutzlaff](#) provides a poignant example of how Christ is preached even through those with many shortcomings.

Gutzlaff, young and zealous, skirted the coast of China in his boat, delivering Chinese tracts. The free-lance missionary had recently lost his wife and daughter after several years of mission work in Indonesia and Thailand.

By the late 1840s, the reports from Gutzlaff's work in China were glowing: the 300 Chinese Gutzlaff had trained to evangelize China in one generation had distributed thousands of New Testaments and counted no fewer than 2,871 baptized converts. Supporters back home were enthusiastic—until the hoax was discovered in 1850.

Gutzlaff was in Europe promoting his mission work at the time, but evidence suggests he already knew he had been deceived by his Chinese workers. They had concocted the conversion numbers and had secretly sold back to the printer New Testaments Gutzlaff had paid to have printed in the first place. The printer would sell them again to an unsuspecting Gutzlaff.

More serious still: for fear of losing financial support, Gutzlaff chose to gloss over the growing discrepancies. When this all came to light, he was disgraced. A disheartened Gutzlaff returned to China to try and pick up the pieces. One year later he died.

If history judges Gutzlaff as a "deluded fanatic," it must add that he was a fool and a fanatic for Christ. In Indonesia and in Thailand (where he and his wife translated the complete Bible into Siamese) and in China, he was foolish enough to dress, eat, and live like those he sought to evangelize—a radical step in his day. He deftly blended evangelism with social concern, as when he helped to negotiate the end to the First Opium War, in 1842.

And though the mission organization he founded, Chinese Union, died with him, out of its soil grew the Chinese Evangelization Society, which sent Hudson Taylor to China in 1853, only two years after Gutzlaff's death. Taylor himself remembered and honored Gutzlaff by calling him "the grandfather of the China Inland Mission." —"Hudson Taylor and Missions to China," *Christian History*, no. 52

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### **ILLUSTRATION** - Gary Hamlin: Fool for Christ - Gary Hamlin: A physician and self-proclaimed "fool for Christ"

Nine years ago [1984] on April Fool's Day, Dr. Gary Hamlin, a Joplin, Missouri, osteopath, became a "fool for Christ." Soon, he began doing seemingly foolish things.

"I lived the first 40 years of life for Gary Hamlin's personal gain," he says. "But as I became obedient to God, he opened my eyes to other people who needed my help."

First, Hamlin co-founded a Teen Challenge center offering free counseling and medical care for young people in trouble. He and his family hosted some of these teenagers in their home. Then, when no other physician volunteered, Hamlin became the first medical director of the AIDS Project of the Ozarks. Lafayette House, a Joplin facility for battered women and children, also engaged Hamlin's services, which he provided free of charge.

But God had more plans. On April 1, 1988, Hamlin opened a highly unconventional medical practice—the Benevolent Friday Clinic. Any patient who needs medical care receives it. No one is turned over to a collection agency for non-payment. Medicare and Medicaid assignments are welcomed.

Build a clinic like that, and people will come—35 to 45 patients a day. However, operating that way, Hamlin has to moonlight every other weekend in a local hospital to help with the overhead. Not everyone in the medical community is as enthusiastic about Hamlin's set-up as he is. But that's okay.

"Luke 14:14 introduced me to the founding principle for the clinic," he explains. "It was God's personal promise to me. 'And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' " Even now, though, "when a patient's eyes well up with tears because someone is willing to give him medical care, it's humbling," Hamlin says.

Teaming up with a Christian dentist, Hamlin is heard weekly on "Healing Touch," a radio call-in program. In 1992, Hamlin entered

the congressional race in his district, finishing a respectable third out of six candidates. He took his cue to "plead the cause of the poor and needy" from Proverbs 31:9. always the initiator, Hamlin enjoys "being a loud voice. Confrontation has a way of making politicians stay on their toes." The future may include more campaigning, especially to lobby for health-care reforms.

In 10 years, when his youngest child is grown, Hamlin hopes to be practicing medicine in Haiti. Since his first visit to Haiti in 1989, Hamlin admits "materialism has lost its value. Before I went to Haiti, where I worked with the Haitian Christian Mission and on my own, I carried a lot of fears in my life. Fear of dying. Fear of financial hardship. But after awhile, the fears began to dissipate. God was weaning me from the world's attractions. He was showing me his vision for my life. To be a fool for him every day. But realize how rich I am." —Christian Reader, "Ordinary Heroes."

**1 Corinthians 4:11 To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless;**

Amplified - To this hour we have gone both hungry and thirsty; we habitually] wear but one undergarment [and shiver in the cold]; we are roughly knocked about and wander around homeless.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, poorly clothed, brutally treated, and without a roof over our heads.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:11 Even now we go hungry and thirsty, and we don't have enough clothes to keep warm. We are often beaten and have no home.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:11 To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:11 χρι τς ρι ρας κα πειν μεν κα διψ μεν κα γυμνιτε ομεν κα κολαφιζ μεθα κα στατο μεν

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace;

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:11 unto the present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and wander about,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:11 Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:11 Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless;

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:11 To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless,

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:11 To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clad and roughly treated, we wander about homeless

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:11 To this day, we go short of food and drink and clothes, we are beaten up and we have no homes;

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:11 To this moment, we are hungry, thirsty, poorly dressed, roughly treated, and homeless.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:11 Even to this hour we are without food, drink, and clothing, we are given blows and have no certain resting-place;

- unto: 1Co 9:4 2Co 4:8 6:4,5 11:26,27 Php 4:12
- and are naked: Job 22:6 Ro 8:35
- and are buffeted: Ac 14:19 16:23 23:2 2Co 11:23-25 2Ti 3:11

- and have: Mt 8:20

## SO YOU WANT TO BE AN APOSTLE!

Check the "job description" for an apostle. Now do you still want to be an apostle? Many in modern Christendom are claiming to be apostles! They need to read these passages by Paul! See [Is God restoring the offices of apostle and prophet in the church today? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless-** Don't miss the fact that every one of these verbs (hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, roughly treated, are homeless) is in the **present tense** indicating that this was their lifestyle, their continual experience! These were the real life experiences of Paul and the apostles. Paul never owned a home and in effect was "homeless," at the lowness levels of ancient society, while the Corinthians were "living like kings."

**MacArthur** quips that "The apostles had come to know firsthand the meaning of Jesus' words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20+).

**Utley** - These verses reflect Paul's own experience (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7–12; 6:3–10 and 2 Cor 11:23–30; also notice Heb. 11:34–38).

Paul gives a good summary of his lifestyle and experiences in the Second letter

Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. 26 I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; 27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. 28 Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches. (2 Cor. 11:23-28)

**Arnold** - The Apostles underwent all kinds of hardships, even being physically beaten and homeless, while the Corinthians sat back in pure comfort and luxury and did nothing to further the cause of Christ. That the Apostles would subject themselves to these hardships to preach Christ was indeed foolishness in the eyes of the world. Today a Christian will be thought of as stupid if he yields everything to Christ. Those who will think him most stupid are professing Christians with no inward reality of Christ. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Hunger** (verb) ([3983](#))([peinao](#) from **pein** = hunger) means to feel the pangs of lack of food. The majority of the NT uses speak of literal hunger. Jesus elevated feeding the hungry to high level in His teaching in Mt 25:35, 37, 42, 44. The figurative use as in Mt 5:6 signifies to have strong desire to attain some goal with the implication of an existing lack. Other passages that use hunger with this figurative sense are Luke 1:53, 6:21, 25, John 6:35, possibly Rev 7:16 (could refer to literal and/or spiritual hunger). In summary, peinao may refer to hunger for earthly produce (eg. Lazarus hungering for crumbs - Lk 16:19-31) or to an intense desire for spiritual nourishment which is also necessary for the continuance of life.

**Roughly treated** (harshly treated) ([2852](#)) [kolaphizo](#) from **kolaphos** = the knuckles or a closed fist and **kolapto** = to strike) means to beat or strike with the fist. To strike with clenched hand. Figuratively it means to cause harm, treat roughly or harshly (1Cor 4:11). **Kolaphizo** is in the **present tense** indicating continuous action, signifying that it was the habit of the lost world to treat the apostle's harshly.

**1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;**

Amplified - And we still toil unto weariness [for our living], working hard with our own hands. When men revile us wound us with an accursed sting], we bless them. When we are persecuted, we take it patiently and endure it.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:12 We do hard work, toiling with our own hands. When we are verbally abused, we respond with a blessing, when persecuted, we endure,

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:12 We work wearily with our own hands to earn our living. We bless those who curse us. We are patient with those who abuse us.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:12 and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:12 We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:12 κα κοπι μεν ργαζ μενοι τα ς δ αις χερσ ν· λοιδορο μενοι ε λογο μεν, διωκ μενοι νεχ μεθα,

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:12 and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:12 we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:12 And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:12 and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:12 and we toil, working with our own hands. When ridiculed, we bless; when persecuted, we endure;

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:12 we earn our living by labouring with our own hands; when we are cursed, we answer with a blessing; when we are hounded, we endure it passively;

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:12 We wear ourselves out doing physical labor. When people verbally abuse us, we bless them. When people persecute us, we endure it.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:12 And with our hands we do the hardest work: when they give us curses we give blessings, when we undergo punishment we take it quietly;

- **labour:** 1Co 9:6 Ac 18:3 20:34 1Th 2:9 2Th 3:8 1Ti 4:10
- **reviled:** Mt 5:44 Lu 6:28 23:34 Ac 7:60 Ro 12:14,20 1Pe 2:23 3:9 Jude 1:9
- **persecuted:** Mt 5:11 1Pe 3:14 4:12-14,19

**And we toil ([kopiao](#)) , working ([ergazomai](#)) with our own hands** - As above, **every** one of the verbs in this verse (toil, working, reviled, bless, persecuted, endured) is in the **present tense** indicating that this was their lifestyle, their continual experience! Greeks despised manual labor, but Paul gloried in it. **Toil** means they were doing hard work, working to the point of utter weariness and exhaustion (so much for my complaining when I feel like I have labored a bit for Jesus!) So what was the **apostle's secret**? Paul gives it in this letter writing...

For I am the least of the apostles, and not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted [dioko](#) - now he is the one being persecuted for Christ!) the church of God. But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His **grace** toward me did not prove vain (useless, futile); but I labored ([kopiao](#)) even more than all of them (HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY), yet not I, but (GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY) the **grace** of God **with** ([sun/syn](#) = not just besides him for that is meta, but *intimately* with him!) me. (1 Co. 15:9-10+) (See the "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)" [100/100](#))

**THOUGHT** - So what's Paul's secret for toiling to the point of exhaustion (and all of the other descriptions in this section)? What's the **KEY WORD** in the passage and probably in his life (other than the word Christ!) Obviously it is grace, amazing grace, superabundant grace upon grace in Christ (2 Ti 2:1+) and dispensed by His Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29+), which is more evidence that Paul was **continually a Spirit filled/controlled man** (Eph 5:18+). This is the example that Paul would command the Corinthians to imitate in 1 Cor 4:16. So it was not about Paul, but about Who empowered Paul, who walked like Christ walked enabled by the Spirit of

Christ. It seems so plain and simple, yet sadly I fear so few in the church have discovered Paul's great secret!

#### Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - Chart Comparing

**Utley** has an interesting observation on **toil...working** - This reflects the Jewish emphasis on the appropriateness of manual labor (cf. Acts 18:3; 20:34; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8). This was depreciated by Greek culture, including the church at Corinth.

**Arnold** - Paul did hard labor with his hands to help support himself in the ministry. Now that was the depth of humility to the Greek because a Greek would not condescend to do manual labor. For that was the work of a slave. In their conceit and pride, the Corinthians would never dirty their hands in work, but the humble spirit of the Apostles shamed the Corinthians. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Toil** (2872) (**kopiao** from **kopos** = labor, fatigue) This root word **kopos** ([word study](#)) is used in secular Greek of "a beating," "weariness" (as though one had been beaten) and "exertion," was the proper word for physical tiredness induced by work, exertion or heat. **Kopiao** means to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion. To physically become worn out, weary or faint. To engage in hard work with the implication of difficulty and trouble. Figuratively **kopiao** means to become emotionally fatigued and/or discouraged and thus to lose heart and/or give up. **Kopiao** speaks of intense, hard, wearisome toil even to the point of utter exhaustion if necessary. The work described by **kopiao** was left one so weary it was as if the person had taken a beating. **Kopiao** describes not so much the actual exertion as the weariness which follows the straining of all one's powers to the utmost. **Kopiao** was sometimes used to refer to athletic training. It is not surprising that **kopiao** was also a verb commonly used in descriptions of the down-trodden masses of the Roman world. Used 21 times in NT - Matt. 6:28; Matt. 11:28; Lk. 5:5; Lk. 12:27; Jn. 4:6; Jn. 4:38; Acts 20:35; Rom. 16:6; Rom. 16:12; 1 Co. 4:12; 1 Co. 15:10; 1 Co. 16:16; Gal. 4:11; Eph. 4:28; Phil. 2:16; Col. 1:29; 1 Thess. 5:12; 1 Tim. 4:10; 1 Tim. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:6; Rev. 2:3

**When we are reviled, we bless** - Both in present tense! In 1 Cor 11:1+ Paul commands the Corinthians "**Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." It was a common practice of speakers and politicians to insult and abuse their opponents. Here we see him imitating Jesus, following "in His steps" (1 Peter 2:21+) for "while being **reviled**, He did not **revile** in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." (1 Peter 2:23+). Paul enabled by the Spirit obeyed Jesus' charge in Matthew 5:44+ "But I say to you, **love** ([agapao](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) - don't try to obey this depending on your fleshly "strength" or resolve!) your enemies and **pray** ([proseuchomai](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for those who persecute you." Paul practiced what he preached in Romans 12:14+ commanding believers to "**Bless** ([eulogeo](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) those who persecute you; **bless** ([eulogeo](#) in [present imperative](#)) and do not curse ([kataraoimai](#) in [present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))." and (Ro 12:19+) "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord."

**Arnold** - Terrible things were said about and to the faces of the Apostles, yet they spoke well of their opponents, even giving a prayer for them. They followed the example of Christ. "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly" (1 Pet. 2:23). In their pride and conceit, the Corinthians fought back and said awful things when attacked verbally by their opponents because they had to defend their Greek honor and protect their egos. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Reviled** (3058) (**loidoreo** from **loidoros** = reviling, railing, one who reviles as in 1 Cor 5:11+) means to subject one to verbal abuse, and thus to reproach, vilify, speak in a highly insulting manner, insult strongly. **Revile** implies a scurrilous, abusive attack prompted by anger or hatred. **Rail** (against) means to scold someone using harsh, insolent, or abusive language. Note the [present tense](#) indicating that the apostles were **continually reviled and railed against** by their devil-inspired protagonists. Even continuous suffering at the hands of the angry mob did not elicit from the apostles any retaliatory words. To show the strong character of the word **loidoreo**, **Moulton and Milligan** cite Calvin on the use 1Co 4:12 - "Loidoria (derived from loidoreo is used in 1Ti 5:14, 1Pe 3:9, "insult for insult") is a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man, but also sharply bites him, and stamps him with open contumely (harsh language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt). Hence **loidoreo** is to wound man as with an accursed sting."

**Calvin** defined **revile** as "a harsher railing, which not only rebukes a man but also sharply bites him, and

stamps him with open contumely. It is to wound a man with an accursed sting." (**Note:** "Contumely" means harsh language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt)

**When we are persecuted, we endure** - Note "when" not "if" -- there was no doubt they would be persecuted and Paul accepted it as "gospel truth" (aka truth for preaching the gospel!) Both in present tense! As with all the responses by Paul and the apostles to mistreatment verbally or physically, the fact that he says we (continually) endure is clear evidence that these men were continually filled with the Holy Spirit, Who Alone could enable such supernatural, "superhuman," responses. In fact one might even look back over this list and see it in a sense as manifestations of the "fruit of the Spirit."

**MacArthur** - They (APOSTLES) knew that they were immeasurably better off than their persecutors. Knowing they would be first in the coming world, they were perfectly willing to be last in this world.

**Arnold** - When the Apostles were persecuted and beaten, they endured and persevered in silence, trusting God to deal with their persecutors. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Persecuted** (1377) ([dioko](#) from **dío** = pursue, prosecute, persecute) means to follow or press hard after, literally to pursue as one does a fleeing enemy. It means to chase, harass, vex and pressure and was used for **chasing down criminals**. **Dioko** speaks of an intensity of effort leading to a pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain. To go after with the desire to harm. It gives us the picture of going on the track of something like the hounds on the hunt and pursuing after the fox and implying a continuing effort to overtake, reach, or attain the goal.

**Endure** (put up with) (430) [anechomai](#) from **aná** = in, up + **echomai**, the [middle voice](#) of **echo** = to have, to hold) means literally to hold one's self up, erect, upright and by extension firm against a person or thing. Thus **anechomai** means to put up with, to bear with (equanimity or evenness of mind especially under stress), to tolerate, to forbear, to be patient with. The figurative idea is to endure discomfort or to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not to retaliate (esp 1Cor 4:12). It conveys the sense of putting up with others, exercising self-restraint (for believers only possible empowered by the Spirit) and tolerance. 14v in NT - Matt. 17:17; Mk. 9:19; Lk. 9:41; Acts 18:14; 1 Co. 4:12; 2 Co. 11:1; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:19; 2 Co. 11:20; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Tim. 4:3; Heb. 13:22

**1 Corinthians 4:13 when we are slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.**

Amplified - When we are slandered and defamed, we [try to] answer softly and bring comfort. We have been made and are now the rubbish and filth of the world [the offscouring of all things, the scum of the earth].

NET 1 Corinthians 4:13 when people lie about us, we answer in a friendly manner. We are the world's dirt and scum, even now.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:13 We appeal gently when evil things are said about us. Yet we are treated like the world's garbage, like everybody's trash-- right up to the present moment.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:13 when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:13 δυσφημοι μενοι παρακαλο μεν· ς περικαθ ρματα το κ σμου γεν θημεν, π ντων περ ψημα ως ρτι.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:13 Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:13 being spoken evil of, we entreat; as filth of the world we did become -- of all things an offscouring -- till now.

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:13 being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:13 when we are slandered, we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the world's



garbage, like the dirt everyone scrapes off their sandals.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:13 being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:13 when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:13 when slandered, we respond gently. We have become like the world's rubbish, the scum of all, to this very moment.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:13 when we are insulted, we give a courteous answer. We are treated even now as the dregs of the world, the very lowest scum.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:13 When our reputations are attacked, we remain courteous. Right now we have become garbage in the eyes of the world and trash in the sight of all people.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:13 When evil things are said about us we give gentle answers: we are made as the unclean things of the world, as that for which no one has any use, even till now.

- La 3:45 Ac 22:22

## THE SCUM AND DREGS OF THE EARTH! WOE!

**When we are slandered** ([blasphemeo](#) defamed), **we try to conciliate** ([parakaleo](#)) - "Humiliation suffered normally leads to anger, which is defined as a desire for revenge accompanied by pain and the recovering of one's own honor, but Paul instead blesses, endures, and conciliates " (New Linguistic Key)

**Utley** - Paul is reflecting the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matt. 5:10–12; 1 Pet. 2:23). The term "reviled" (loidoreō) is also included in the list of sins in 1 Cor. 5:11 and 6:10 (loidoros). Vincent, in *Word Studies*, says this term refers to personal verbal abuse, while the term "slandered" (dusphēmeō, cf. v. 13) means public defamation (cf. 4:13; 2 Cor. 6:8). I have not been able to confirm this distinction. They both are part of a large number of Koine Greek terms used in the semantical category of "insult and slander" (cf. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, pp. 433–434).

**Arnold** - The Apostles tried to console and pray for those who said evil things about them. They did not try to defend or justify their actions, but committed the slanderers to God. When we bless, endure and answer kindly to our opponents, we are acting in the way Christ acted. We cannot control how people act towards us but we can control how we react to people when they treat us badly. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**We have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now-** **Scum** refers to that which is cleansed all around, that which is removed—dirt and filth—as a result of a thorough cleansing and figuratively was an absolute base insult when applied to humans! The word was also used of condemned criminals of the lowest class who were sacrificed as offerings for the cleansing of a city in the sense of a ransom! The word **dregs** refers to "that which is removed by the process of cleaning dirt off, scouring, scum. The previous word indicates a rinsing, this word a scraping of a dirty vessel (TLNT). It was used in the papyri in a letter conveying the greeting; "your humble and devoted servant" (MM). It was used in the baths as an ironical form of greeting, "your offscouring," meaning "your humble servant"" (New Linguistic Key)

Spicq renders 1 Cor 4:13, "We have become as the filth (Gk perikatharmata) of the earth, the refuse (Gk peripsēma) of all, up to the present . . .".

Greeks used **perikátharma** "of criminals kept at the public expense, to be thrown into the sea, or otherwise killed, at the outbreak of a pestilence, etc. It is used in 1 Cor 4:13 much in this sense."

**MacArthur** - **Scum** and **dregs** are synonyms and refer to scrapings or offscourings cleaned from a dirty dish or pot and then thrown away. The words were commonly used figuratively of the lowest, most degraded criminals, who often were sacrificed in pagan ceremonies. That is the way the world looked at the apostles. They were religious scum and dregs, and no better than the criminals like whom they were often treated. It is not hard for believers to get along in the world as long as they keep the gospel to themselves. But if they preach, teach, and live God's full Word, the world takes great offense (cf. 2 Tim. 3:12+). It resents being under the light of truth. Satan is the god of this world and the ruler of darkness. His kingdom cannot stand the light of the gospel and will persecute and destroy if possible those who stand for it and live in it. The world will attempt to scour off and throw away anyone who boldly proclaims the Word. We are not scum and dregs in God's sight, but we are nevertheless servants and stewards. Therefore neither in the world's eyes nor in God's eyes do we have reason to boast in ourselves. That which the Lord loves in His

servants, and that which eventually will bring them reward and glory, is a humble and obedient spirit. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

"These two terms are quite *vulgar* and very close in meaning, used for the wash-water and scrapings from dirty dishes thrown out after washing or purification. . . . they are terms of abuse and base insult when applied to humans"

**Scum** (4027)(**perikatharma** from **perí** = around + **kathairō** = to cleanse) refers to filth or defilement washed away by cleansing. **BDAG** says means to "cleanse all around' or 'on all sides'; that which is removed as a result of a thorough cleansing, dirt, refuse, off-scouring, also as a designation of the 'off-scouring' of humanity." Friberg says it refers to "what is removed or thrown out as a result of sweeping all around; the metaphorical meaning of its only use (1C 4.13) is uncertain; (1) dirt, garbage, rubbish; (2) scapegoat, propitiatory offering, from the Greek custom of offering victims to remove public defilement; the first alternative, denoting ill treatment, is generally preferred " (Analytical Lexicon) Only NT use. It refers to "scummy water" or water left over after a person's cleansing and usually contained anything scraped, rubbed or scoured off (dirt, skin, etc) by the too used to remove the (olive) oil on their skin.

**Zodhiates** - It may be used to denote an expiatory victim or ransom, as cleansing from guilt and punishment (Sept.: Prov. 21:18). It is used metonymically in the NT of wretches or outcasts. Paul, in 1 Cor. 4:13, mentions that the disciples of Christ are considered to be the refuse or outcasts of the world.

**Scum** conveys someone as "the filth of the world, representing 'the most abject and despicable men' (Grimm-Thayer) – the scum or rubbish of humanity" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 237).

**Dregs** (4067)(**peripsoma**) A vile and worthless person, or more literally "the scum of all things" and refers to "what is removed by wiping or scraping clean all around; as used in 1Co 4.13 it may be either (1) scum, offscouring, dregs or (2) sacrificed victim, (expiatory) ransom, from the Greek custom of offering victims regarded as the scum of society to remove public defilement (see also perika,qarma [rubbish; scapegoat]); the first alternative is generally preferred." (Analytical Lexicon) Only NT use.

**Arnold** - The Apostles were considered the filth of society, the vilest of all men. Why would they put up with this treatment? Because they found Christ, and while the world may have looked at them as dung, they had found the answer to life. "What is more, I considered everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ. . ." (Philip. 3:8). When a Christian is treated like rubbish, like garbage or like dung, he should not try to get even, but should commit the situation to God. There is a familiar saying today: "I don't get mad; I just get even." This is the wrong attitude. Committing the situation to God seems to be the true Christian life style and response to bad treatment. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

## 1 Corinthians 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

Amplified - I do not write this to shame you, but to warn and counsel you as my beloved children.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am not writing these things to shame you, but to correct you as my dear children.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am not writing these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

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

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:14 Ο κ ντρ πων μ ς γρ φω τα τα λλ ς τ κνα μου γαπητ νουθετ [v].

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:14 Not as putting you to shame do I write these things, but as my beloved children I do admonish,

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:14 I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:14 I'm not writing this to shame you, but to warn you as my dear children.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved

children.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am writing you this not to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am writing all this not to make you ashamed but simply to remind you, as my dear children;

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:14 I'm not writing this to make you feel ashamed but to instruct you as my dear children.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:14 I am not saying these things to put you to shame, but so that, as my dear children, you may see what is right.

- write: 1Co 9:15 2Co 7:3 12:19
- my: 1Co 4:15 2Co 6:11-13 11:11 12:14,15 1Th 2:11
- I: Eze 3:21 Ac 20:31 Col 1:28 1Th 5:14

#### Related Passages:

Gal 4:19+ My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you--

1 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Timothy 1:2-4+ To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience the way my forefathers did, as I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day, longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy.

Philemon 1:10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment,

## THE CURE FOR CONCEIT

**I do not write these things to shame you**- The sarcastic remarks by Paul could have been interpreted by the Corinthians as Paul's attempt to shame them, but that was not his goal nor intention for writing these things.

**Guzik** - With his biting sarcasm, Paul knows the Corinthian Christians might be pretty ashamed. He wants them to know his purpose hasn't been to make them feel ashamed, but to warn them of a significant spiritual danger—pride.

**MacArthur** - They had much to be ashamed of, and if they took the apostle's words to heart they could not have helped being ashamed. But it was not Paul's ultimate purpose to shame them...It is possible for a parent to correct a child in a way that tears down rather than builds up. In Ephesians Paul warns: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). In the name of discipline, even Christian discipline, children can be provoked and abused in ways that leave permanent scars. They are often put down with criticism and punishment but seldom lifted up with admonition and encouragement.

**But** - Term of contrast. which often marks a "change of direction." What is the clear contrast here (check the context)?

**To shame you** (put to shame)(1788)(**entrepo** from **en** = in + **trépō** = to turn) means to turn back or about, in a state of turning, as turning one's attention in a riveted way. This can include recoiling (turning away) in shame, and suggests "wholesome shame which leads a man to consideration of his condition" (G. R. Berry). In the active sense it means put to shame, make ashamed, reprove (1Co 4.14). Stated another way **entrepo** is the term for when it is necessary to shame someone for a *redemptive* purpose, i.e. to turn them *back to their senses* ("positive shame"). In the passive it means to be put to shame, be ashamed (Titus 2.8). In 2 Th 3:14 we read "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he **will be put to shame**." For modern secular humanism, "shaming" someone or shunning them is always "bad" (cold, judgmental). But when this is done in a proper spirit, Scripture teaches it is very beneficial (necessary) – helping to recover someone before their soul is forever damaged (see also 1 Tim 1:20).

**To** (present tense - continually) **admonish you as my beloved** (**agapetos**) **children** (**teknon**) - Here we see Paul's heart for these disobedient spiritual children. He loved them with Spirit energized, supernatural **agape love**, the kind of love with which God our Father bestows on us as His children (who are often a lot like the Corinthians saints!!! Speaking from personal experience!)(cf 1Jn

3:1+). Sometimes fathers disown their children because of their bad behavior or failure to conform to the parent's wishes/desires, but not the apostle Paul. The jealous, strife ridden Corinthians were still his spiritual children and were still **beloved** (Paul's first use of [agapetos](#) in this letter) by him (as a Spirit filled man, his love was not conditioned on their behavior, good or bad, and it was bad!).

**MacArthur on beloved children** - It is clear from what Paul has been saying to them that they were not obedient, morally upright, doctrinally sound, or mature. But they were loved. (MacArthur has some insightful comments on how Paul was a loving father - see sermon notes [How to be a Spiritual Father](#))

**Arnold** - . The first cure for conceit is to heed admonition. Paul's sternness turned to tenderness. He didn't want the Corinthians to feel only shame; he wanted to warn them of pride and a self-sufficient attitude. At the point of sharpest censure, Paul called them "dear children." The word for "warn" in the Greek is *neutheo* which gives the idea of confronting Christians with wrongdoing in order to lead them into the correct way of life. Paul had been correcting the Corinthians for their wrong thinking, wrong attitudes, wrong actions—things which were contrary to the Word of God and he did that to rectify their rebellious ways. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Admonish** (warn, caution, gently reprove, exhort)(3560)([noutheteo](#) from **noús** = mind + **tithemi** = place) (see also [Nouthesia](#)) literally means to place in the mind and so to warn or give notice to beforehand especially of danger or evil, by reasoning with them. The idea is to lay it on the mind or heart of the person, with the stress being on influencing not only the intellect, but also the will, emotions and disposition. The idea is to counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct. **Noutheteo** "presupposes that something is wrong and its intention is to correct, to make right. Its purpose is to bring about a change—in belief, attitude, habit, life-style, or in whatever way is needed. In fact, it is a warning to change or incur judgment." (MacArthur)

**Noutheteo** especially appeals to the mind, supplying doctrinal and spiritual substance (content), "providing needed reasoning to turn (alter) a person's direction towards God's reasoning." **Noutheteō** includes helping someone make the journey of thinking through an issue – from premise to necessary conclusions (convictions) which rest on a solid, scriptural foundation. **Noutheteō** then makes skillful use of logic, redirecting someone's reasoning (thought-process) to find the Lord's approval. This "exerts positive pressure" on someone's logic (reasoning), i.e. urging them to choose (turn to) God's best. **Noutheteō** ("to warn through teaching") focuses on changing wrong beliefs – especially by challenging the wrong premise(s) involved. Indeed, one wrong premise drives many wrong conclusions. **Noutheteō** supplies necessary instruction (evidence, proof) that effectively warns, admonishes, or reprimands (Souter) – leading people to righteous behavior.] **Noutheteō** appeals to the mind (logic) to "believe differently" by effective warning (admonishing, correcting, exhorting). The Bible explicitly urges us to confront sin! This requires **nouthetéō** ("admonish, warn, correct"), done on the basis of God's Word (the perfect standard). Our mind matters! God changes us by transforming our thinking (Ro 12:1-3). True sanctification means learning to incorporate the legitimate "extreme-ends" of an issue – a necessary discipline to finding genuine balance (true moderation). In sum, **Noutheteō** involves appealing to a person's reason to make meaningful change. This root (nouthete-) does not strictly mean "chastise," though this can be involved – i.e. with needed admonishing, correcting, exhortation, etc The English word **admonish** means to express warning or disapproval especially in a gentle, earnest, or solicitous manner; reproofing firmly but not harshly; or advising to do or not do something. **Noutheteo** describes "putting sense into someone's head", alerting them of the serious consequences of their actions and does not mean being judgmental or critical in a superior manner but instead imparting a caring kind of warning against danger. Noutheteo = 8 times in 8v in the NT- Acts 20:31; Ro 15:14; 1Co 4:14; Col 1:28; 3:16; 1Th 5:12, 14; 2Th 3:15).

**Beloved** (27)([agapetos](#) from **agapao** = to love, **agape** = unconditional love part of the fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+) means beloved, dear, very much loved. **Agapetos** describes the love of another, this love being called out of the "giver's" heart by preciousness of the recipient of the love (the "beloved"). **Agapetos** is used only of Christians as united (by covenant, the New Covenant) with God and/or with each other in love. **Agapetos** describes "one who is in a very special relationship with another" (BDAG) and in secular Greek is used mostly of a child, especially an only child to whom all the love of his parents is given (cf use by the Father describing His only Son and Abraham describing his "only son" in Ge 22:2). Agapetos in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 4:14; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 10:14; 1 Co. 15:58; 2 Co. 7:1; 2 Co. 12:19;

**Children** (5043)([tekon](#) from **tikto** = bring forth, bear children, be born) is strictly a child produced, male or female, son or daughter. Teknon naturally includes learning from mentors – which is very positive as it exalts depending on the Lord Himself. (See 1 Ti 1:18; 2 Ti 1:2; Philemon 10). The greater our dependence on the Lord, the greater we develop in knowing Him. Jesus Himself set the model for us when saying, "I do nothing unless I see My Father doing it first" (Jn 5:19). **Teknon** is thus a child as viewed in relation to his or her

parents or family. In the plural, **teknon** is used generically of descendants, posterity or children. **Teknon** is "a child living in willing dependence" which illustrates how believers must live in utter dependence upon the Lord moment-by-moment. They draw guidance (care, nurture) from their heavenly Father as Christ speaks His *rhēma*-word within to impart faith (cf. Ro 8:16,17 with Ro 10:17, Gk text). Ironically we only grow up, by growing in dependence on our heavenly Father! Doing this always brings eternal transformation ("spiritual formation" in Christ) – i.e. more conformity to Him as we are transformed from "glory to glory" (2 Cor 3:18).

**Teknon** emphasizes the childlike (not childish) attitude of heart that willingly (gladly) submits to the Father. Note that another Living in faith transforms the believer from child to Bride (cf. Eph 5:27)! We successfully make this "journey" by discerning what pleases the Lord by hearing His voice and doing what we hear. The goal of life is growing from child to the glorified bride of Christ (cf. Rev 19:7-9)! While the Lord is Creator of all people, He is only the Father of His born-again children. Salvation means a believer is spiritually begotten of God (re-born, adopted by the Lord). This brings the new status of being in Christ, i.e. belonging to the Lord as His true child (**téknon**). Note that **huios** (5207), translated **son**, differs from **teknon** because the latter gives prominence to the fact of birth, whereas **huios** stresses the dignity and character of the relationship and usually speaks of one who is fully mature. Despite these distinctions, because these words often overlap in meaning and are used seemingly without discrimination, one should not press their semantic differences in every case but allow the **context** to rule in the interpretation (always a good rule!) Paul's uses of *teknon* in the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 4:14; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 6:13; 2 Co. 12:14

**Matthew Henry** - Verses 14-21. In reproving for sin, we should distinguish between sinners and their sins. Reproofs that kindly and affectionately warn, are likely to reform. Though the apostle spoke with authority as a parent, he would rather beseech them in love. And as ministers are to set an example, others must follow them, as far as they follow Christ in faith and practice. Christians may mistake and differ in their views, but Christ and Christian truth are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Whenever the gospel is effectual, it comes not in word only, but also in power, by the Holy Spirit, quickening dead sinners, delivering persons from the slavery of sin and Satan, renewing them both inwardly and outwardly, and comforting, strengthening, and establishing the saints, which cannot be done by the persuasive language of men, but by the power of God. And it is a happy temper, to have the spirit of love and meekness bear the rule, yet to maintain just authority.

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**John Calvin - Offering Godly Correction** - A man with a malevolent disposition may inflict disgrace upon someone, reproving him and his faults in such a manner that the sinner is held up to the reproach of all. Though accused, Paul does not do that. He simply affirms that what he has said was done without malice, not to upbraid or to hurt the reputation of Corinthian believers, but with a paternal affection he admonished them about what he saw as defective in them. What was the purpose of this admonition? It was that the Corinthians, who were puffed up with mere empty notions, might learn to glory in the abasement of the cross, as Paul did, and might no longer despise Paul for those grounds on which he was deservedly honorable in the sight of God and angels. In effect, they should lay aside their accustomed haughtiness so they might set a higher value on those marks of Christ (Gal. 6:17) that were upon Paul rather than on the empty and counterfeit show of false apostles. Let teachers learn from this that, in reproving others, they must always use such moderation as not to wound men's minds with excessive severity. In agreement with the well-known proverb, they must mix honey or oil with vinegar so that they might above all things take care not to appear to triumph over those whom they reprove or take delight in their disgrace. Indeed, they must endeavor to make clear that they seek nothing but to promote the welfare of others. For what good will the teacher do with a reprimand if he does not season his reproof with that moderation of which I have spoken? Hence if we desire to do any good by correcting men's faults, we must distinctly let them know that our reproofs proceed from a friendly disposition.

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## Beware Of Warnings

As my beloved children I warn you. —1 Corinthians 4:14

CToday's Scripture: Ezekiel 3:16-21

Americans are getting warned to death. Manufacturers are growing increasingly wary of being sued when their products are misused, so they are attaching warning labels to hundreds of items.

For example, a Batman outfit bears this caveat: "Parents, please exercise caution—For Play Only. Mask and cape are not protective; cape does not enable user to fly."

So many warnings appear on items sold in our stores, say the experts, that they've lost their effectiveness.

While these kinds of warnings may fall on deaf ears, the Bible points out the importance of heeding God's warnings. Ezekiel's words in chapter 3 make it clear that a warning is vital not only for the person receiving it but also for the person giving it (vv.16-21).

God's words must be taken seriously. "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit," we are told (Eph. 4:30). "Abstain from every form of evil," we are reminded (1 Th. 5:22). Jesus warned against adultery and lust (Mt. 5:27-28) and against judging others self-righteously (Mt. 7:1-5).

The Lord who made us knows how we should live. He longs to protect us from danger. Let's make sure we take all of His warnings seriously. Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The devil is subtle, deceptive, and sly;  
He cleverly tricks us to swallow his lie,  
But his cunning methods we're sure to discern  
By making God's warnings our daily concern. —DJD

God's warnings are to protect us, not to punish us.

**1 Corinthians 4:15 For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.**

Amplified - After all, though you should have ten thousand teachers (guides to direct you) in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the glad tidings (the Gospel).

NET 1 Corinthians 4:15 For though you may have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, because I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:15 For even if you had ten thousand others to teach you about Christ, you have only one spiritual father. For I became your father in Christ Jesus when I preached the Good News to you.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

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

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:15 ν γ ρ μυρ ους παιδαγωγο ς χητε ν Χριστ λλ ο πολλο ς πατ ρας· ν γ ρ Χριστ ησο δι το εαγγελ ου γ μ ς γ ννησα.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:15 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.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:15 for if a myriad of child-conductors ye may have in Christ, yet not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, through the good news, I -- I did beget you;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:15 For you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can't have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:15 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:15 Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:15 for even though you might have ten thousand slaves to look after you in Christ, you still have no more than one father, and it was I who fathered you in Christ Jesus, by the gospel.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:15 You may have countless Christian guardians, but you don't have many spiritual fathers. I became your father in the Christian life by telling you the Good News about Christ Jesus.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:15 For even if you had ten thousand teachers in Christ, you have not more than one



father: for in Christ Jesus I have given birth to you through the good news.

- **If you were to have:** 2Ti 4:3
- **for:** 1Co 3:6,10 9:1,2 Ac 18:4-11 Ro 15:20 2Co 3:1-3 Ga 4:19 Tit 1:4 Phm 1:10-12,19 Jas 1:18 1Pe 1:23

## Greek Pedagogue

### THE CORINTHIAN'S ONE SPIRITUAL FATHER

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation. Always begs question "What is being explained?"

**If you were to have countless tutors in Christ yet you would not have many fathers** - NET = "For though you may have ten thousand guardians in Christ" Note that the **IF** here is a **third class condition** which introduces a potential action. **Countless** is the rare adjective [muriōs](#) (Mt 18:24, 1 Cor 14:19) in the plural meaning "ten thousand" and used hyperbolically, as in English when we say something like a 'zillion', thus expressing an extremely large or incalculable number. Paul is stating his claim that regardless of how many teachers they had experienced, he is their legitimate spiritual father. And while a tutor had some authority over the children in a household, ultimately it was the father who had ultimate authority.

**Arnold** - .Although the Corinthians had many tutors (Apollos, Peter), they had only one spiritual father, and that was Paul. The word "guardian" is the Greek word pedagogue meaning a slave who was given the responsibility for training the child and giving schooling. He did not belong to the family and was subordinate to the child's father. Though he might love the child dearly, there were no natural ties. His father had begotten the child and child's welfare was ultimately in his hands. Because Paul was their spiritual father, they were to listen to him. They were to heed his warning. The second cure for conceit is to listen to others about our conceit and then seek to do something about it. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**John Stott** explains that "Paul uses the word again in 1 Corinthians 4:15, saying 'You may have ten thousand tutors in Christ, but you have only one father' (NEB). In other words, 'there are plenty of people to discipline you, but I am the only one to love you.' Later in the same chapter he asks: 'Am I to come to you with a rod in my hand (i.e. like a paidagōgos), or in love and a gentle spirit (i.e. like a father)?' (1 Cor. 4:21, NEB)." ([The Message of Galatians](#))

**Tutors** (child conductor, guardian)([3807](#)) ([paidagogos](#) rom **país** = a child + **agōgós** = a leader from **ágō** = to lead) literally means a child leader, a [Pedagogue](#). Properly, a legally appointed overseer, authorized to train (bring) up a child which includes administering discipline, chastisement, and instruction – i.e. doing what promotes development. **Thayer** - Among the Greeks and Romans the name was applied to trustworthy slaves who were charged with the duty of supervising the life and morals of boys belonging to the better class. The boys were not allowed so much as to step out of the house without them before arriving at the age of manhood . . . The name carries with it an idea of severity (as a stern censor and enforcer of morals) in 1 Cor 4:15, where the father is distinguished from the tutor as one whose discipline is usually milder, and in Gal. 3:24, 25 where the Mosaic law is likened to a guide which arouses the consciousness of sin, and is called *paidagogos eis Christon*, i.e., preparing the soul for Christ, because those who have learned by experience with the law that they are not and cannot be commended to God by their works, welcome the more eagerly the hope of salvation offered them through the death and resurrection of Christ, the Son of God

#### Related Resource:

- [Wikipedia article on pedagogue](#)

**For** ([gar](#)) - term of explanation. Always begs question "What is being explained?"

**In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel** ([euaggelion](#)) - Paul asserts he was their "spiritual father" by virtue of Jesus allowing him to be the one to preach Christ crucified to them. Only be or through the gospel can we see God's Spirit bring about spiritual birth (Jn 3:3+, cf James 1:18+) in a lost sinner! Apologetics, etc, are fine up to a point, but speak the Gospel and pray God's Spirit would open their heart like He did Lydia's heart in Acts 16:14+!

**Warren Wiersbe** - Jesus warns us that we should call no man on earth "father" (Matt. 23:9), but it is still true that those who lead souls to Christ are, in a sense, "fathering" them. (See 1 Thes. 2:11.) Paul had been their spiritual father in that he gave them the Gospel and helped to lead them to Christ. A sinner is born into God's family through the Spirit of God (John 3:6) and the Word of God (1 Peter 1:23), but God uses human instruments to bring sinners the Gospel. It had been Paul's "spiritual travail" (Gal. 4:19)

that had made possible a church in Corinth. (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines)

**Charles Hodge** "For though multitudes are converted by the Spirit through the Word without any ministerial intervention, just as grain springs up here and there without a husbandman, yet it is the ordinance of God that the harvest of souls should be gathered by workmen appointed for that purpose."

**THOUGHT** - A Christian cannot be a spiritual father without being used by God to bring life to spiritual children. Unfortunately, many Christians have never become spiritual fathers. They have never produced any spiritual offspring. They have never led a person to Christ and helped train him in the ways of God. A Christian is one who has been given new life in Christ, and one of the most important characteristics of life is reproduction. Yet many believers have never reproduced believers. In a sense they are contradictions to what a Christian is. Every believer should be a spiritual father, God's instrument for bringing new lives into His kingdom. That begins the discipling process. (MacArthur)

Compare one of Jesus' last commands "Go therefore and **make disciples** ([matheteuo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to](#) fulfill this commission! NOTE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY COMMAND IN THE GREAT COMMISSION) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,." (Mt 28:19+) This begs the question - Are you making disciples, faithful men and women? Paul wrote to Timothy "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2+).

**Related Resource:**

- [Make Disciples 1](#)
- [Make Disciples 2 - Begins study of Five Most Important Passages for Believers](#)
- [Make Disciples 3 - Chart comparing Filled with the Spirit and the Word](#)
- [Make Disciples 4](#)
- [Make Disciples 5](#)
- [Make Disciples 6](#)
- [Make Disciples 7](#)
- [Make Disciples 8](#)

**Guzik** points out that "We don't have apostolic authority like this. Leading someone to Christ does not give you special authority over their life, but it does give you a special relationship."

**1 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore I exhort you, **be** imitators of me.**

Amplified - So I urge and implore you, be imitators of me.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:16 I encourage you, then, be imitators of me.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:16 So I urge you to imitate me.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

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

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:16 παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:16 Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:16 I call upon you, therefore, become ye followers of me;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:16 I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me.

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

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:16 I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:16 That is why I urge you to take me as your pattern

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:16 So I encourage you to imitate me.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:16 So my desire is that you take me as your example.

### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 11:1+ **Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **imitators of me**, just as I also am of Christ. (IMITATE PAUL WHO IMITATES CHRIST!)

Philippians 3:17+ Brethren, **join** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **in following my example**, and **observe** ([present imperative](#)) those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Ephesians 5:1+ Therefore **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) imitators of God, as beloved children;

1 Thessalonians 1:6+ You also **became imitators of us and of the Lord**, (NOTE QUALIFYING PHRASE "OF THE LORD" - DON'T FOLLOW ANYONE WHO IS NOT FOLLOWING THE LORD!) having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,

1 Thessalonians 2:14+ For you, brethren, became **imitators** of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews,

Hebrews 6:12+ so that you will not be sluggish, but **imitators** of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

2 Thessalonians 3:9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would **follow** our example.

Hebrews 13:7+ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, **imitate** their faith.

John 13:15 "For I gave you an **example** that you also should do as I did to you.

## A GOOD EXAMPLE: FOLLOW THE LEADER

**Therefore I** (present tense - continually) **exhort you, be imitators of me** - "Mimic me!" Paul presents his life as the model they are to emulate, giving them a command in [present imperative](#) which can only be obeyed as we [depend on the Holy Spirit](#). We all need mentors in Christ, persons like Paul who model the life of faith (see 2 Ti 3:10-12+). Believers are to emulate men who exemplify a life of faith and obedience. Of course, our supreme heavenly model is God Himself (Eph 5:1+) and we emulate our Father. by hearing His voice in His Word and lovingly obeying (enabled by His Spirit) what we hear. Similarly, our supreme earthly model is Christ Jesus as we see in 1 Corinthians 11:1+ where Paul commands the Corinthians for a second time to **'Be** ([present imperative](#)) **imitators of me**, just as I also am of Christ." The power of example is profound. Paul was imperfect, but enabled by the Spirit he sought to follow the Perfect Life of Jesus, and thereby left the Corinthians a worthy example to emulate. For our entire life we are to remain teachable children who are playing (not "playing at") the divine game of "follow the leader," our Leader being Christ Jesus. While this is to be our lifelong task and privilege, I fear that many believers really do not understand the importance of the principle of imitation and thus they fail to realize the promise of "abundant life" in Christ (Jn 10:10b) For that reason, when you have time, take a moment and study the topic [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)

He not only could say, "Do as I say," but also, "Do as I do."

Discipling is more than teaching right principles;

it is also living those principles before the ones being disciplined

- John MacArthur

**Arnold** - The third cure for conceit is to be humble. Paul is not saying they should be followers of him rather than of Apollos or Peter, for that would contradict everything he has said in the first four chapters of First Corinthians. He wants these people to have the same humble attitude the Apostles displayed when they were slandered, persecuted, poorly treated, called fools and thought of as condemned men. Paul and all the Apostles held themselves in low esteem. They, especially Paul, set a very good example and could say, "Be imitators of me." The Corinthians were babies in Christ and were to stop imitating other babies. They were to follow the actions of those more mature in Christ. Was Paul conceited when he said, "Imitate me"? He is merely stating men will follow what a person does and not so much what he says. We can talk our heads off but if our lives do not back up what we say others will

not follow. A man who does not live what he says is really saying it doesn't matter what he believes and life isn't that important. In another place in this book Paul tells us the secret of his humble life. "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). He is saying to these Corinthians, "You imitate me because I'm imitating Christ, and when you imitate me, you are imitating Christ." It is this Christlike humility that eliminates conceit and pride. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Guzik** writes "The first reaction of many of the Corinthian Christians would probably be horror. "Imitate you, Paul? You are regarded as a fool, as weak, as dishonored; you are hungry and thirsty and poorly clothed, homeless and beaten; you work hard to support yourself with manual labor. People look at you and see filth and the offscouring of all things. And you want us to imitate you?". Paul might reply, "Yes, imitate me. Not because of all these difficulties, but despite them, and often because of them, the glory and power of Jesus Christ shines through me." Because they didn't have printing back then, Paul couldn't just hand out Bibles. People had to learn the gospel by watching his life. **Maybe that wasn't so bad after all!**"

**Exhort** (encourage, implore) (3870) ([parakaleo](#) from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry. See the following discussion for elaboration on the nuances of this great Greek verb. One writer has said that Paul's use of **parakaleo** in verses like Eph 4:1, Ro 12:1, 1Th 4:1 is "one of the tenderest expressions in all the Bible." **Kent Hughes** illustrates the root idea of **parakaleo** "to come alongside and encourage" with the following example - I see this exemplified every time my church has a roller skating party, and the parents put their little ones on skates for the first time. Mom and Dad skate with their child, holding on to his or her hands, sometimes with the child's feet on the ground and sometimes in the air. But all the time the parents are alongside **encouraging**....[exhortation] is a wonderful gift, and we are to place it at Christ's feet and be willing to be worn out in its use. **Encourage one another** - [Study the "one anothers" - most positive, some negative](#). Our English word "**encourage**" means literally "with heart." To encourage in a sense is to give them new heart. Shallow sympathy makes people feel worse --- true spiritual encouragement makes them feel better. It brings out the best in people.

It is worth noting that **parakaleo** is the verb root of **parakletos**, our **Helper** (Comforter = The Holy Spirit) in Jn 14:16;26;15:26;16:7 and our "Advocate" (Jesus) 1Jn 2:1; **Kenneth Wuest** adds that "The verb **parakaleo** refers to the act of calling someone to one's side in order to help one. The noun **parakletos** refers to the one who is called upon to render aid. It was used in the law courts of one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a counsel for the defence, an advocate. In the widest sense it means "a helper, a succorer, one who aids another." ([Wuest Word Studies - Eerdmans Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used by permission) In the three passages in the Gospel noted above, the Holy Spirit is the Comforter to the saint, not that He comforts him in the sense of consoling him merely, but that He is sent to be the One to come to the aid of the Christian in the sense of ministering to him in his spiritual life. In the first epistle of John ([1Jn 2:1](#)), the Lord Jesus is the **parakletos** of the believer in the sense that He pleads our cause before our heavenly Father in relation to sin in the life of the Christian, praying us back into fellowship with God by the way of our confession and the cleansing blood."

**Imitators** (3402) ([mimetes](#)) means one who follows. **Mimetes** basically means to copy or imitate someone's behavior and has many related words in English - "*mime*" (one who acts out an imitation of another person or animal), "pantomime" (a theater production which originally was without words), "mimeograph" (a machine which makes many copies from one stencil). **Mimetes** is always used positively in the NT of followers of Christ emulating a God-approved example. **Mimetes** used 6x in NT- 1 Co. 4:16; 1 Co. 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 1 Thess. 2:14; Heb. 6:12

**Truth for Today - A HELPFUL MOUNTAIN GUIDE** - Since all Christians are imperfect, we need the example of someone who also is imperfect but knows how to deal with imperfection. Perhaps this illustration will help. Suppose I decide to embark on a dangerous mountain-climbing expedition. A helicopter drops a leader on top of the mountain, and he looks down on me and says, "This is the top. Just climb up here—this is where you want to be." He would not be as much help as someone climbing up the path ahead of me, saying, "Follow me. I know the way up." Christ shows us the goal we need to achieve, but we also need someone to model the process of reaching the goal. Only by overcoming sin can we become more like Christ, so we need to find another Christian who is also battling to overcome sin. A godly human example can show you how to deal with all of the products of our fallen flesh. Begin to search for and follow a godly guide. (John MacArthur)

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:10-17

A radio ad for watches suggests that listeners buy a watch with a bright color band and then wear it with clothes of other colors. When people notice your watch because of its contrasting color, the ad says, "They'll see that you have 'color courage.' And they'll want to be like you." Something in us enjoys having others follow our example.

If you do a quick reading of 1 Corinthians 4, you might think the apostle Paul sounds a bit boastful when he says to follow his example of self-sacrifice (v.16). But a closer look at Paul's words shows why he wrote so confidently. He could ask people to imitate him because he imitated Christ (11:1), the greatest Servant of all.

The persecution he endured and the position he held in the church (4:10-17) all happened because Paul followed Jesus. When he mentioned that even if the Corinthians had 10,000 teachers he would still be their father in the faith (v.15), he was acknowledging that Jesus is the only reason people could trust his teaching.

If we want people to imitate us, we must first imitate our Lord. If we have any reason for people to follow our example—if we have any courage to point others to the Savior—it is because of Him, not us. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Joyfully following Jesus the Lord  
And trusting His lead every day  
Makes us examples that others can see  
To follow when trials come their way. —Sper

Others should imitate us only as far as we imitate Christ.

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### **Imitate Me**

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:9-17

Andrew Marton recalls the first time he met his future brother-in-law Peter Jennings, who was a top foreign news correspondent in 1977. He said he was so nervous that he acted like "a jittery fan in the presence of a journalistic hero whose personal wattage could light up Manhattan."

Andrew looked up to Peter and tried to emulate him. He became a journalist too and approached his assignments the way Peter did—"he dove in and worked harder than everybody else." Andrew tried to walk like Peter, to dress like him, and to have the same "aura."

We all tend to follow the patterns of others. The Corinthians did too. But they shifted their focus away from Christ and onto individual leaders. Rather than emulating the Christlike qualities of these leaders, they let their allegiances lead to various divisions and contentions in the church (1 Cor. 1:10-13). The apostle Paul recognized their error, so he sent Timothy to remind them of his teachings and the importance of walking in obedience to the Lord (4:16-17).

We are to imitate Christ (1 Peter 1:15-16). It can also be helpful to have mentors who imitate Him. Those who walk in step with Christ provide a model for us to emulate. But our ultimate example is Jesus Himself. Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To follow in the steps of those  
Whose eyes are on the Lord  
Will help to keep us strong and true,  
And faithful to His Word. —D. De Haan

Imitate those who imitate Christ.

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### **Apprenticeship Program**

I urge you, imitate me. —1 Corinthians 4:16

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Life certainly was a lot simpler years ago. If a man was a carpenter, his son was likely to be the same. That's because the shop was at home and the boy worked with his father. The son watched carefully as Dad cut the wood, planed and smoothed it, then fastened it together to build a table or a bench. It was apprenticeship by example.

Most young people don't learn their trades like that anymore. Vocations are far too complex and the training way too demanding.

One aspect of life, however, is the same as it was years ago. Children not only learned how to do things from Dad and Mom, they also learned about life. They saw their parents' values and ethics in action every day in their homes.

Christian moms and dads still have "little apprentices" watching how they put their beliefs into practice. It goes on at mealtime, in the car, in the store, in conversation with or about neighbors—all the time. What a wonderful opportunity to teach our children how to live for Christ! And young people not only need it, they want it.

Paul told his children in the faith to imitate him—to follow his example (1 Cor. 4:16). Are we living for Christ in such a way that we want our children to imitate us?: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our children watch and imitate  
The things we say and do;  
So if we imitate the Lord,  
They'll imitate Him too. —Sper

Children may close their ears to advice, but their eyes are always open to example.

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## Just Watch

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. —1 Corinthians 11:1

Today's Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:14-17

The young boy looked up at his grandfather and wondered aloud, "Grandpa, how do you live for Jesus?" The respected grandfather stooped down and quietly told the boy, "Just watch."

As the years went by, the grand-father was an example to the boy of how to follow Jesus. He stayed rock-steady in living for Him. Yet the grandson often lived in a way that was not pleasing to God.

One day the young man visited his grandfather for what both knew would be the last time. As the older man lay dying, his grandson leaned over the bed and heard his grandpa whisper, "Did you watch?"

That was the turning point in the boy's life. He understood that when his grandpa had said, "Just watch," he meant, "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). He vowed that from then on he would live as his grandfather did—striving to please Jesus. He had watched, and now he knew how to live.

Is somebody watching you? Are there younger Christians who need to see that it is possible to live for Jesus every day and in every way? Challenge them—and yourself. Challenge them to "just watch." Then show them the way. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Be aware that someone's watching  
As you go along your way;  
Your example is remembered  
More than anything you say. —Hess

There's no better sermon than a good example.

**1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church.**

Amplified - For this very cause I sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and trustworthy child in the Lord, who will recall to your minds my methods of proceeding and course of conduct and way of life in Christ, such as I teach everywhere in each of the churches.



NET 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my dear and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:17 That's why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I am sending 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.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:17 δι το το πεμψα μ ν Τιμ θεον, ς στ ν μου τ κνον γαπητ ν κα πιστ ν ν κυρ , ς μ ς ν αμν σει τ ς δο ς μου τ ς ν Χριστ [ ησο ], καθ ς πανταχο ν π σ κκληρ σ διδ σκω.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:17 because of this I sent to you Timotheus, who is my child, beloved and faithful in the Lord, who shall remind you of my ways in Christ, according as everywhere in every assembly I teach.

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:17 This is why I have sent Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful son in the Lord. He will remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this reason I am sending you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord; he will remind you of my ways in Christ (Jesus), just as I teach them everywhere in every church.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:17 and why I have sent you Timothy, a dear and faithful son to me in the Lord, who will remind you of my principles of conduct in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:17 That's why I've sent Timothy to you to help you remember my Christian way of life as I teach it everywhere in every church. Timothy is my dear child, and he faithfully does the Lord's work.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:17 For this cause I have sent Timothy to you, who is my dear and true child in the Lord; he will make clear to you my ways in Christ, even as I am teaching everywhere in every church.

- **sent:** 1Co 16:10 Ac 19:21,22 Php 2:19 1Th 3:2,3
- **who is:** 1Co 4:15 1Ti 1:2 2Ti 1:2
- **faithful:** 1Co 4:2 7:25 Nu 12:7 Pr 13:17 Mt 24:45 25:21,23 Eph 6:21 Col 1:7 4:9 2Ti 2:2 Rev 2:10,13
- **my ways:** 1Co 7:17 11:2,16 16:1 2Ti 3:10
- **in:** 1Co 14:33

## Related Passages

2 Timothy 1:2 To Timothy, my beloved son: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord

2 Ti 2:1-2 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to **faithful** ([pistos](#)) men who will be able to teach others also.

**For this reason** - Term of conclusion. Begs question "What reason?" Forces you to examine preceding context.

**I have sent to you Timothy** ([Timotheos](#)), **who is my beloved and faithful child** ([teknon](#)) **in the Lord** ([kurios](#)) - Have sent is past tense (historical) indicating this did occur but we have no other biblical record of this visit .Timothy had so faithfully followed

(imitated) Paul, that Paul could send him to the Corinthians as if he were coming himself. Note that while the Corinthians were **beloved** like Timothy, they could hardly be called **faithful** like Timothy, who had **followed** (PAUL'S) teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings." (2 Ti 3:10-11a+)

**Beloved** (27) see [agapetos](#)

**Trustworthy** (faithful) (4103) see note above [pistos](#)

**And he will remind you of my ways which are in Christ**([Christos](#)) - **Remind** means that they had previously heard of and seen Paul's ways in Christ during the 18 months he was in Corinth (Acts 18:11+). Paul's walk had matched his talk and Timothy would remind them of that truth. Now several years later they were in need of some serious "cognitive therapy" (so to speak). So Timothy could remind them of their spiritual father's ways, because he had followed Paul's "teaching, conduct, purpose..." as noted above.

**In Christ** - 13x in 12v in 1 Corinthians and 8x in 8v in 2 Corinthians - 1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:4; 1 Co. 1:30; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 4:10; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 4:17; 1 Co. 15:18; 1 Co. 15:19; 1 Co. 15:22; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 16:24; 2 Co. 1:21; 2 Co. 2:14; 2 Co. 2:17; 2 Co. 3:14; 2 Co. 5:17; 2 Co. 5:19; 2 Co. 12:2; 2 Co. 12:19;

**Just as I teach everywhere in every church**([ekklesia](#)) - Timothy would teach the same **ways** that Paul taught **in every church**. for Paul did not vacillate or deviate but fixed his eyes steadfastly on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of the faith (Heb 12:2+). The **ways** Paul taught and Timothy would teach were the **ways** of Jesus. The use of the word teach ( ) means that Timothy was to teach doctrine, not pious platitudes. Like Paul his teaching was to be validated by his example.

**Robertson** - Paul expects his teachings and practices to be followed in every church (cf 1 Cor. 14:33).

**Teach** (teaching, taught) (1321) [didasko](#) from [dáo](#)= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun [didaskalia](#) and the adjective [didaktikos](#)) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. **Didasko** means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching taught. So the teacher teaches in such a way that as the student is taught, he/she now changes his/her mind saying in essence "I won't do it this way, but I will do it this way because I've learned this doctrine or this teaching." Doctrine determines direction of our behavior--conformed to world or to God? (cf Ro 12:1+) Teaching that Scripture finds significant is not that which gives information alone but which produces (Spirit enabled) transformation (2 Cor 3:18+), making disciples (learners) who seek to live supernaturally (enabled by the Spirit - Eph 5:18+) in loving obedience to the will of our Father Who art in Heaven. The only other use of **didasko** in the Corinthian letters is 1 Cor 11:14.

**Arnold** - Paul planned to send Timothy to them to remind them of his manner of life so they could imitate his example of following Christ. Timothy, who had a much different personality than Paul, was Paul's "trouble shooter." Timothy was more timid and less confrontational than Paul, so he could say things to the Corinthians about Paul that Paul himself could never say. Timothy was to bring to their attention the things Paul taught in every church. Paul was no harder on them than he was on any other church he had founded. He longed to see all the churches conform their behavior to Christ ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Tendencies within the Corinthian congregation to drift into questionable doctrine and to dissipate their energies in internal strife were the factors which caused Paul to write the two letters which are preserved for us as 1 and 2 Corinthians. There were also other letters which were not preserved. The purpose of the letters was to urge the Corinthians to follow him (v. 16) as he followed Christ (11:1). This was also the reason for sending Timothy, and later Titus, as personal emissaries to remind the Corinthians of Paul's teachings.

**Remind** (363)([anamimnesko](#) from [ana](#) = again + [mimnesko](#) = remember so literally recall again is more forceful than [mimnesko](#) alone) carries idea of carefully thinking back and reconstructing something in one's mind, not merely remembering. Call to remembrance. Cause to remember. To remind someone of something. In passive voice means to be reminded or to remember.

## 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

Amplified - Some of you have become conceited and arrogant and pretentious, counting on my not coming to you.

NET 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some of you have become arrogant, thinking I will not visit you again.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:18 ὡς μὲν ὑψώθητε ὡς ἐὰν οὐκ ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:18 And as if I were not coming unto you certain were puffed up;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some are inflated with pride, as though I were not coming to you.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:18 But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some have become inflated with pride, as if I were not coming to you.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:18 On the assumption that I was not coming to you, some of you have become filled with your own self-importance;

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:18 Some of you have become arrogant because you think I won't pay you a visit.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:18 Now some are full of pride, as if I was not coming to you.

■ 1Co 4:6-8 5:2

**Now some have become arrogant (phusioo)** - KJV = "Now some are puffed up" NJB = "you have become filled with your own self-importance." Praise God that Paul was not forced to say ALL but only SOME! Were these the leaders of the factions? Paul does not tell us, but clearly they needed to be corrected, because as he teaches latter (again in the context of boasting and immoral behavior) "*a little leaven will leaven the entire lump*" (1 Cor 5:6+)

**Arnold** - At Corinth there were some leaders and their followers who definitely opposed Paul, and he says these people were filled with boastful pride and arrogance. Apparently these enemies of Paul within the church said that he was a coward and would not face them and that was the reason he was sending Timothy. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**As though I were not coming to you** - The Amplified version picks up the sense of Paul's words = "counting on my not coming to you."

**Guzik** - Some Corinthian Christians were so arrogant they thought Paul was afraid to visit them. When they thought Paul was afraid of them, it made them all the more proud in their hearts.

**Wiersbe** - Several times in this chapter you find the phrase "puffed up," referring to the Corinthians' attitude of superiority and carnal pride (vv. 6, 18, and see 5:2). What made them "puffed up"? Was it not the leaven of sin in their church (5:6)? As the yeast of sin grew, it inflated them into a false spirituality; therefore, Paul found it necessary to warn them. This "puffed up" attitude often reveals itself in much talking. "Paul will never come here!" they were saying (vv. 18–19). "He writes stern letters and tries to scare us, but he will never come back!" "Be careful!" warned the apostle. "Talk is cheap! When I do come, I want to see how much power these Christians have, and not how much they talk. A fleshly Christian is often a bragging Christian, but there is no demonstration of God's Spirit in his or her life (see 1 Cor 2:4). (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines)

**Arrogant** (inflated)([5448](#)) see [phusioo](#)

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Benjamin Franklin, "He that falls in love with himself has no rivals!"

John Ruskin, "When a man is all wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package."

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), "Education without religion, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil."

**1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant but their power.**

Amplified - But I will come to you [and] shortly, if the Lord is willing, and then I will perceive and understand not

what the talk of these puffed up and arrogant spirits amount to, but their force (the moral power and excellence of soul they really possess).

NET 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord is willing, and I will find out not only the talk of these arrogant people, but also their power.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come-- and soon-- if the Lord lets me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people just give pretentious speeches or whether they really have God's power.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

NIV 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.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:19 λε σομαι δ ταχως πρς μς ν κριος θελ σ , κα γν σομαι ο τν λ γον τν πεφουσιωμων λλ τν δ ναμιν·

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:19 but I will come quickly unto you, if the Lord may will, and I will know not the word of those puffed up, but the power;

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will know not the talk but the power of those who are inflated with pride.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power.

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord is willing, and I shall ascertain not the talk of these inflated people but their power.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:19 but I shall be coming to you soon, the Lord willing, and then I shall find out not what these self-important people say, but what power they have.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:19 If it's the Lord's will, I'll visit you soon. Then I'll know what these arrogant people are saying and what power they have.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come to you in a short time, if it is pleasing to the Lord, and I will take note, not of the word of those who are full of pride, but of the power.

- **I**: 1Co 14:5 Ac 19:21 2Co 1:15,17,23 2:1,2
- **if**: Ac 18:21 Ro 15:32 Heb 6:3 Jas 4:15
- **not**: 1Co 4:18 2Co 13:1-4
- **but**: 1Co 2:6

## ARE THEIR WORDS PUFFED UP OR DIVINELY EMPOWERED?

**But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills** ([thelo](#)) - Paul was subservient to the Lord. Here we see Paul had a thought (will) but was willing to submit it to the will of His Master, Jesus, Who knows whether it would be good for Paul to come to Corinth. (Paul learned this truth in Acts 16:7+) The statement indicates that Paul would not allow the arrogance to continue unchallenged.

**MacArthur** - It is always presumptuous to make plans, even for the Lord's own work, that are not willingly open to His approval and change.

**Uteley on if the Lord wills** - Paul returned again and again to strengthen the churches he started (cf. 11:34; 16:5). Paul wanted to come to them, but his life was not his own. He must seek and follow the Spirit's direction (cf. Acts 16:6). This **IF** introduces is a **third class conditional statement** sentence, which means potential action. This was no meaningless phrase for Paul (cf. 1 Cor 16:7;

Acts 18:21; Ro 1:10; Ro 15:32).

One might ask to which *coming* to them does Paul refer? If you look at the Table Summarizing Paul's Ongoing Relationship with the Corinthians, you note Paul wrote 4 letters and made 3 visits. In context this coming clearly refers to Paul's initial visit described in detail in Acts 18:1-17+ (v1 = "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth." circa 51 AD), during which God used him to establish the local assembly in Corinth. As in chapter 1 Paul again refers to the Corinthians as his **brethren**, emphasizing that in spite of their divisions, they belonged to the same spiritual family, the family of God.

**Soon** (shortly)(5030)(**tacheos** from **tachus** = quick) means quickly, without delay or at once (qualifying an action) as here in [Lk 14:21](#). When qualifying time tacheos means soon (1 Cor 4:19). In a negative sense in Gal 1:6 = quickly, hastily. From the time of Homer into the era of New Testament, it is most frequently translated "quickly, shortly, hastily."

**And I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant(phusioo) but their power (dunamis)** - The "spiritual duel" would be between "puffed up" men's "puffed up" **words** (cf worldly wisdom philosophy) and God's Word of Truth. It would be like dueling with a child's plastic swords against the **power** of the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17+). In short. No contest! Today we might say Paul is saying something like "**Put your money where your mouth is!**" Don't tell me about your power. Show me your power. It is not what you say (conversation), but what you do (character). The Cross is the power of God (1 Cor 1:18+), but these puffed up, philosophically minded Corinthians had essentially **defused** the Cross of its power with their wise words. They would soon find out whether their words were powerful or not.

Paul's words here remind us of his warning to Timothy about those who are "holding to a form (**morphosis**) of godliness (NOT A BAD DESCRIPTION OF SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS WHO WERE ARROGANT), although they have denied its **power (dunamis)**; Avoid such men as these.(2 Timothy 3:5+)

**George Brooks** - The spirituality of a person does not depend on that person's words. The spirituality of a person depends on the power of that person's life. Paul was certain that the impressiveness of speech was not as important as a committed lifestyle.

**D A Carson** - To understand this threat, it is important, once more, to remember the flow of the argument. What Paul says, literally, is that he will find out "not the word of these arrogant people, but the power." Immediately we are reminded of the discussion in 1 Corinthians 1. The Corinthians had become intoxicated by the "wisdom of word," but were thereby emptying the cross of Christ of its power (1:17). They were so enamored of form and rhetoric that showing off with eloquence became more important to them than the gospel, which is displayed in its greatest power when it is not running noisy competition with people more interested in promoting themselves than in God's power (2:1-5). When Paul comes, however, he will not be impressed by their "word"; he won't really care "how these arrogant people are talking," no matter how eloquent their rhetoric. No, he will be interested in only one thing: What power do they have? In the light of 1:18-2:5, this is the power of the gospel, the power to forgive, to transform, to call men and women out of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Mere talk will not change people; the gospel will. So Paul is going to ask for their credentials: What people has your eloquence genuinely transformed by bringing them into a personal knowledge of the crucified Messiah? He is going to expose them for the empty, religious windbags that they are. (The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians)

**MacArthur** - The arrogant backsliders talked a lot about their freedom and independence and rights, much as do many professing believers today who buy the world's philosophy and like to ape its ways. They no doubt thought they had good arguments for Paul in the event he showed up. But he would be checking their spiritual power, not their words, the inside not the outside

Earlier Paul spoke of the powerful effect of the Gospel

For the **word of the cross** is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power (dunamis) of God**. (1 Cor 1:18+)

but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power (dunamis) of God** and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor 1:24+)

and **my message and my preaching** were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and **of power (dunamis)**, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on **the power (dunamis) of God**. (1 Cor 2:4-5+)

**Arnold** - Paul planned to come to them soon if the Lord willed it, for his whole life was lived in the consciousness of God's sovereignty and leading in his life. When he got there he was going to deal with those arrogant boasters not by their fair speeches but by what they did. He would see if they had any power in their lives, if they were practicing what they preached, if they were sacrificing their time, talents and monies for Christ. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Guzik** - Those among the Corinthian Christians who loved high-sounding words and their successful image had their own word, but Paul had the true **power** of the Gospel. The final test of wisdom is **power**; the word of the cross not only has the power to mentally illumine, but also to morally save (1 Cor 1:18+). Puffed up: Essentially, Paul threatens to pop the bubble of these **puffed-up gasbags!**

As the writer of Hebrews said

For the **word of God** is living and active and sharper than any **two-edged sword**, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Hebrews 4:12-13+)

**Arrogant** (inflated)(5448)(**phusioo** from **phusao** = breathe, blow, inflate - fig extension of **phusioo** (nf) = puff up, to inflate **phusia** = a pair of air bellows!) means literally to puff up, to inflate, to cause to swell up or blow up. Paul uses this word figuratively to picture an egotistical person, with inflated view of self, spewing out their arrogant ("puffed-up") thoughts, as in the present passages (1 Co. 4:6, 18, 19) where **phusioo** is a KEY WORD. **Phusioo** means make proud or arrogant (active sense) or to become conceited, proud or haughty. To become puffed up or put on airs. In classic Greek **phusioo** was used to describe anger that swells (puffs up) the heart. **Moulton and Milligan** record an example of **phusioo** from ancient literature - "priding themselves on their birth". **Phusioo** describes one who has an exaggerated self-concept. The **present tense** in 1 Cor 4:6 pictures this self "inflation" as a continual practice and the use of the perfect tense in 1 Cor 4:18, 19 pictures "puffed up" as their state (they became proud at some point in the past and now are still proud). **Phusioo** - 7x in 7v (not in Septuagint) - 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 4:18; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 5:2; 1 Co. 8:1; 1 Co. 13:4; Col. 2:18 **NAS** = arrogant(5), inflated(1), makes arrogant(1). Clearly the concentration of **phusioo** in the first epistle to the Corinthians reflects that spiritual pride among the believers in Corinth was a serious spiritual problem. God is inveterately opposed to the self inflated mindset (Jas 4:6±, cp Pr 6:16, 17, 29:23)

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## James Smith - SPEECH AND POWER

"I will know not the speech of them which are Puffed up, but the power" (1 Cor. 4:19).

"That was a good speech." "He is a very eloquent speaker." Such language is common, but Paul has another way of judging such tongue deliverances. "I will know not the speech, but the power." Unspiritual minds can only judge the speech, the outward form—they know not the power. What power is this, by which the very heart-life of Christians is revealed? It is that holy, gracious, gentle, heart-melting, inscrutable something called "anointing," that makes eternal and spiritual things very real and precious and powerful to those who hear. The Holy Spirit acting through the heart and speech of the preacher. Without this power all preaching is but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. May our speech be always seasoned with such salt.

### 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power.

Amplified - For the kingdom of God consists of and is based on not talk but power (moral power and excellence of soul).

NET 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is demonstrated not in idle talk but with power.

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power.

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:20 ο γ ρ ν λ γ βασιλε α το θεο λλ ν δυν μει.

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:20 for not in word is the reign of God, but in power?

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.



NRS 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power.

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God consists not in spoken words but in power.

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:20 God's kingdom is not just talk, it is power.

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.

- 1Co 1:24, 2:4 Ro 1:16 Ro 14:17 Ro 15:19 2Co 10:4,5 1Th 1:5

#### Related Passage:

1 Corinthians 1:2:4 ( and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,

### ONE'S LIFE MUST MATCH ONE'S WORDS

**For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power-** "This is a central principle of great importance. Faith that does not result in right living may have many words to support it, but it will have no power. A person's true spiritual character is not determined by the impressiveness of his words but by the power of his life (cf. Matt. 7:21–23+)." (MacArthur)

**Utley** - To put this truth in an American proverb, "actions speak louder than words" or "the proof is in the pudding."

**Kingdom of God** in Corinthians - 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 6:9; 1 Co. 6:10; 1 Co. 15:50

**Arnold** - When God's spiritual kingdom is truly in one's heart, the evidence will be a life of good works. If there is no power, no good works, no evidences, then there is a good possibility there is no salvation. The fourth cure for conceit is to live consistently -- to make our lives match our words and to operate on divine power. This produces true Christlike humility. Jonathan Edwards said, "There is no man so much out of Satan's reach as a humble man." ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

**Charles Hodges** - Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"—which is equivalent to saying that true religion does not consist in external observances, but in inner graces. This is the form of the idea that seems best suited to the passage before us. "God's reign—His dominion in the heart or in true religion—does not consist in professions but in reality."

Paul spoke of the association of words and power to the Thessalonians --

1 Thessalonians 1:5 for our gospel did not come to you in word only (OBVIOUSLY IT WAS PROCLAIMED IN WORD), but also in power ([dunamis](#)) and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

**Power** (Miracle producing power) ([1411](#)) [dunamis](#) from [dunamai](#) = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. **Vine** - (In [2Ti 1:7](#) [dunamis](#)) denotes the ability requisite for meeting difficulties and for the fulfillment of the service committed to us.

#### 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

Amplified - Now which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of correction, or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

NET 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

NLT 1 Corinthians 4:21 Which do you choose? Should I come with a rod to punish you, or should I come with love and a gentle spirit?

ESV 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of

gentleness?

NIV 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?

GNT 1 Corinthians 4:21 τ ῑ λετε; ν βδ λθω πρ ς μ ς ν γ π πνε ματ τε πρ α τητος;

KJV 1 Corinthians 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?

YLT 1 Corinthians 4:21 what do ye wish? with a rod shall I come unto you, or in love, with a spirit also of meekness?

ASV 1 Corinthians 4:21 What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

CSB 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you want? Should I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

NKJ 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

NRS 1 Corinthians 4:21 What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

NAB 1 Corinthians 4:21 Which do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love and a gentle spirit?

NJB 1 Corinthians 4:21 What do you want then? Am I to come to you with a stick in my hand or in love, and with a spirit of gentleness?

GWN 1 Corinthians 4:21 When I come to visit you, would you prefer that I punish you or show you love and a gentle spirit?

BBE 1 Corinthians 4:21 What is your desire? is my coming to be with punishment, or is it to be in love and a gentle spirit?

- **Shall I come to you with a rod**: 1Co 5:5 2Co 10:2,6,8 12:20,21 13:2 3:10
- **with love and a spirit of gentleness**: 2Co 10:1 1Th 2:7 Jas 3:17

#### Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 5:5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

### IT'S YOUR CHOICE! CORRECT YOUR BEHAVIOR OR ELSE!

**What do you desire (thelo)?** - Amplified - "Now which do you prefer?" Will you heed the admonishment and will you imitate me? Or will you continue in your fleshly, puffed up way? It is your choice. What is the desire of your heart, to obey God or to obey your fallen flesh? If the latter, you must be disciplined!

**A T Robertson** - Paul gives them the choice. They can have him as their spiritual father or as their paedagogue with a rod.

**Kistemaker** points out that "He puts the question not merely to those who are arrogant but to the entire Corinthian church. Everyone in the congregation shares the blame for the damage that divisiveness and arrogance have caused. Because of their corporate responsibility, they must now respond to Paul's question."

**Shall I come to you with a rod** - Do you desire discipline from the hand (rod) of a **father** who loves you (my beloved children - 1 Cor 4:14)

**MacArthur** - If he needed to use a stick to shape them up, he would use one. He does not have in mind a literal stick to beat them with, but an attitude and spirit of strong, painful discipline. He would deal sternly with their pride, the sin God hates most. But if they responded favorably to his letter, he would treat them with restrained, patient kindness.

**Arnold** - Paul gave the Corinthians a choice. Whether he would come in love or with stern discipline depended solely on whether they were ready to deal with the situation. They were given the liberty to choose. If they dealt with their pride, conceit and preacher worship, Paul would come in love. If they refused to deal with their conceit and divisions, he would come wielding a rod of discipline.

The fifth cure for conceit is to choose obedience. All men have hearts with pride and conceit, some more than others, but if they choose to deal with it, they will be blessed by God and not come under discipline. ([Conceit: The Root Of Divisions](#))

Our heavenly Father disciplines us for our spiritual good...

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM (ED: THE IMPLICATION IS THEY ARE NOT RESISTED THE WILES OF SIN! WHICH IS WHY THEY NEED REPROOF! CAN YOU AND I IDENTIFY? I THINK SO!) 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons (DIVINE DISCIPLINE PROVES OUR OUR IDENTITY AS GOD'S CHILDREN. DON'T DESPISE IT!). 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live (ED: REALLY LIVE, LIVE SPIRIT FILLED FRUITFUL LIVES THAT BRING GLORY TO OUR FATHER - Mt 5:14-16+)? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for **our good**, so that (PURPOSE) we may **share His holiness**. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields **the peaceful fruit of righteousness**. (Hebrews 12:4-11+)

**Rod** (4464) **rhabdos** probably related to **rhapis** = a rod or stick ) is literally a relatively narrow piece of wood of variable length. Depending on the context, rhabdos can describe a **rod** (including that with which one is beaten or used as an instrument of punishment - see 1 Cor 4:21), a staff (as used by shepherd [cp Lxx use in Mic 7:14] and figuratively speaking of such authority in Re 2:27, 12:5, 19:15 (see notes Rev 2:27, 12:5, 19:15), a stick (including a walking stick - cp Mt 10:10, Mk 6:8, Lk 9:3) or a measuring stick (Re 11:1)

**or with love and a spirit of gentleness?** - Love and gentleness speak of a man filled with the Spirit for both are part of the Spirit's fruit (Gal 5:22-23+)

**Hodges** - Paul asks whether he should come with severity or filled with the Spirit as the author of meekness. It is clear from this, as from numerous other passages, that the apostles exercised the right of discipline over all the churches; they could receive into the communion of the church or excommunicate from it at their discretion. They were messengers of Christ sent to establish and to administer his kingdom. The following chapter furnishes a notable instance of the exercise of this authority.

**Paul** used this same word **gentleness** (**prautes**) in a somewhat similar context in his last letter writing to young Timothy

"The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, 25 with **gentleness** (**prautes**) correcting (**paideuo** - disciplining which is ) those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,." (2 Ti 2:24-25)

**Love** (26) **agape** is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (see note on fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+). **Agape** is not based on pleasant emotions or good feelings that might result from a physical attraction or a familial bond. **Agape** chooses as an act of self-sacrifice to serve the recipient. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation.

**Gentleness** (4240)(**prautes**) describes the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one's self-importance. **Prautes** is a quality of gentle friendliness - gentleness, meekness (as strength that accommodates to another's weakness), consideration, restrained patience, patient trust in the midst of difficult circumstances. **Gentleness** (**prautes**) is a part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:23+).

#### Related Resources:

- [Notes on Galatians 5:23 - Fruit of the Spirit - Gentleness](#)
- [Gentleness as exemplified by the Lord's bondservant](#)