

The Letter of 1 Corinthians

Synopsis

Written by the Apostle Paul
To the Church at Corinth, near Athens.

- Chapter 1: Division was apparent in the church.
In His great wisdom, God chose ordinary, not extraordinary, people.
- Chapter 2: God's wisdom is communicated to inspired men in words.
- Chapter 3: Those inspired men are servants of God, not leaders of divisions.
- Chapter 4: Paul was qualified by a broad range of experiences to represent God.

<p>The proper way to view workers.</p> <p>There are requirements for Christian workers.</p> <p>The Lord will judge His workers when He comes.</p>	<p>1 Corinthians 4</p> <p>1. So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.</p> <p>2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.</p> <p>3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.</p> <p>4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Paul had been entrusted by God with His message.</p> <p>He had to be faithful with that message.</p> <p>He is not filled with self-doubt or guilt.</p> <p>A clear conscience does not mean that one is right with God.</p> <p>Judging nothing = judging Paul's work. (</p> <p>Motives do count!</p>
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<p>The names of “Paul” and “Apollós” were substituted for local divisive leaders.</p> <p>They, like all others, received the message from someone else, so why boast?</p> <p>There is no special treatment for God’s workers.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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?</p> <p>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!</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>The <u>written</u> word was already controlling the church.</p> <p>The message came from the Apostles, it did not originate at Corinth.</p> <p>Sarcasm. Use it sparingly.</p> <p>The <i>ruling</i> was only in their minds.</p> <p>As a victory parade after war. As lion lunches. As spectacles to spectators.</p>
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<p>They considered themselves wise, strong, honored.</p> <p>Paul says this as a warning.</p> <p>He is their father in Christ.</p>	<p>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!</p> <p>11 To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless.</p> <p>12 We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;</p> <p>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.</p> <p>14. I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me.</p>	<p>Paul's experience had been much different (then theirs.</p> <p>Paul faced privation and opposition. "All you want" vs. hungry "rich" vs. rags "kings" vs. homeless He financed his own way.</p> <p>He handled curses and persecution.</p> <p>He handled slander and contempt.</p> <p>Their pseudo leaders claimed to be church guardians.</p> <p>His life was a model. (</p>
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<p>Timothy would remind them of Paul's example.</p> <p>There was arrogance towards Paul.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.</p> <p>21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a whip, or in love and with a gentle spirit?</p>	<p>Paul had a broad experience. Paul's teaching was consistent everywhere.</p> <p>He decided to come, with the Lord's permission</p> <p>The church is the kingdom.</p> <p>Like a good mattress, Paul could be extra firm.</p>
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4:5 The story is told of Mr. Jones who picked up the wrong umbrella in a hotel lobby and was about to walk out when the rightful owner called attention to his mistake. Embarrassed, he offered his apologies. Finding his own, he went on his way.

The incident, however, reminded him that he had promised to buy both his wife and daughter an umbrella. To his delight he found that a local store nearby had them on sale, so he bought two. Just as he was getting into his car with his unwrapped purchases, he saw the man he had encountered earlier. He was eyeing him suspiciously. Seeing the three umbrellas hooked over his arm, the stranger exclaimed sarcastically, "I see you had a good day after all!" Although Mr. Jones blushed, he was not guilty of any wrongdoing.

Things are not always what they appear to be on the surface. Beware of the sin of misjudging others!

4:10 Socrates, in his day, made the statement that he was the wisest of the Athenians. That shocked everybody because he was a very humble man. So they asked him what he meant. And he said something like this, "Well, there are a great many of the Athenians who think they know, and I know I do not know, I am the wisest of the Athenians."

4:16 To have unquestioning reliance upon a pastor or other spiritual leader can lead to embarrassment and even bitter disillusionment. I was reminded of this recently when I came across an interesting item about President Coolidge. Once he invited some friends from Vermont to dine at the White House. They were worried about their table manners, so they decided to do everything their host did. All went well until coffee was served. Coolidge poured his into the saucer. The guests

did the same. The President added sugar and cream. So did the visitors. Then Coolidge leaned over and placed his saucer on the floor for the cat.