

## **1 Corinthians 4**

**V1-5** As *servants of Christ* we are managers of the once hidden but now revealed truths of God. To be good managers is it required that we be faithful with what has been entrusted to us. Our accountability first and foremost is before God. He is the One who called us, the One we follow, the One we serve, and the One who instructs us. It is clear that Paul was aware of what others (believers and unbelievers) thought and said about him and how he ministered. His heart and love for people is obvious by his life choices. What carried Paul and even compelled him was His love for God. That love was expressed by his choices to serve people. Even though some of those he served criticized or ridiculed or 'judged' him as inferior, Paul continued to serve God. There is great joy and peace when we remember that we are *servants of Christ*!

**v.4** In this verse Paul is not speaking of having no sin when he says, "*I know of nothing against myself.*" In the context he is speaking of being a servant, a faithful servant. In regards to serving he knows that he is not rebellious or disobedient to God. This gives him peace and confidence before men and before God. It is evident from this verse that Paul, as a steward, performed a humble, truthful 'self-examination' of his service to God. What are the benefits of genuine self-examination as well as the drawbacks to not doing it? (Reference verses: Psalm 77:6, 139:23-24, Galatians 6:4)

**TRANSPARENCY TIME. Consider and comment on this statement "Inconsistency causes confusion". What are some keys to developing consistency in your walk with God?**

**V6** In using himself and Apollos as examples, Paul is able to get to the core issue rather than have a surface level confrontation. By not 'pointing' at the Corinthians he is able to reason with them.

**v.7,8** We see here that Paul presents a practical, logical question; "*What is so special about you? What do you have that you were not given? And if it was given to you, how can you brag?*" (Contemporary English Version)

Discuss the point Paul is making?

**v.8-13** Some in the church in Corinth had perceived themselves to be wise. They paraded around as spiritual kings implying that Paul and others were stuck on the simple things. The Corinthians were distinguished, strong and wise in their own eyes. Paul exposes this perception by speaking satirically or sarcastically (v10). By contrasting his and Apollos' lives to the attitude of some of the Corinthians he cuts to the heart of the envy, division, and strife(3:3) that was common in the Corinthian church. (Puffed up self-promotion) How can embracing v1 enable you to have joy even when you face challenges like v12-13?

In verses **14-16** Paul reveals his motive and reminds them of their relationship to him. How does he describe his relationship to them? How might a father interact differently than "instructors"(v15)?

**17-20** Contrast and discuss the mindset of the *puffed up* with the mindset revealed in Philippians 2:5-8

**V21** In essence this is saying; "Are you teachable, if so which method of instruction do you prefer?"

In verse 5 as well as in verses 14-15 there is the underlying issue of motives. A significant portion of what the New Testament deals with is directed at the motives of the individual. In his own life Paul checked his motives and scripture instructs us to do likewise (Psalm 26:2, 139, Galatians 6:4, 1Corinthians 11:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5). This

week ask God to help you check the inventory of your heart.

Remember He is your comfort, your hope, the light to your path. Let Him remove the weeds in the garden of your heart so you may bear much fruit.

*"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so that you will be My disciples."*  
John 15:8