

1 Corinthians Part One

Lesson #13, Chapter 4:1-5

Read through chapter 4 before you begin this lesson. Ask the Lord for His grace to learn from and apply His Word to your life.

1. Paul opens the chapter with an admonition about “us.” Who does Paul include in that plural pronoun? See 1 Cor. 3:5, 22; 4:9.

2. What does Paul desire for himself and his co-workers according to verse 1?

3. What issues have been plaguing the church that would make this mindset necessary? See 1 Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-7, 21-23.

4. What does Paul mean when he says he desires others to view him as a servant? Luke 1:2; 4:20 (uses the word *attendant*); 17:10 and Acts 13:5 (uses the word *helper*) provide the sense in which Paul uses this word here.
 - a. See what you can find out about the meaning of the Greek word Paul uses here for *servant* (Strong's #5257-*hyperetes*).

5. What is Paul a *steward* of according to verse 1?

6. What do you learn about a *steward* from the following verses? See Luke 12:42-43; 16:1-2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.

The Greek word for steward is *oikonomos* that literally means to be a “house manager.” In Titus 2:5 when talking about a woman's priorities, Paul coined the word *oikourgos* which means to be a “worker at home or a keeper of the home” and carries with it the idea of running or overseeing the home in a manner similar to that of a steward as we've seen from the verses above. What we learn is that the home is a woman's *stewardship* given to her by God.

7. In light of 1 Cor. 1:10-13 and 3:5 why would Paul desire others see him as a steward of the mysteries of God?
8. What mysteries were the apostles stewards and proclaimers of? See Rom. 16:25-27; 1 Cor. 15:51-53; Eph. 3:3-7; Col. 1:25-27.
9. What do you learn about stewards in verse 2? Define that quality.
10. How does the requirement of a steward as found in verse 2 *relate* to Paul's calling to preach the gospel and train up disciples of Jesus Christ?

11. You haven't been called as an apostle to proclaim the mysteries of God, but you have been called to be a steward of the gospel, of your calling in Christ, and your spiritual gifts. To what degree have you been faithful and found trustworthy in your stewardship in these areas?
 - a. Based on your past history, would the Lord entrust you with more areas of stewardship today? Why or why not?
 - b. If you find room for improvement in any area (and who doesn't) what are the first steps you must take to grow in faithfulness? See 1 Jn. 1:9; Luke 16:10; 2 Cor. 5:7; Gal. 2:20; 5:22-25; 2 Thess. 1:11-12; 3 Jn. 5.
12. In verses one and two Paul asks that others view him as a servant and steward of Jesus Christ. In effect, he is asking others to examine his life and see if it qualifies for those titles. Yet, how does he counter that invitation with some startling information in verse 3?
13. If Paul were to examine his life what would he find according to verse 4?
14. What weight does Paul place upon the judgments of men or even his own assessment of himself (verse 4)?

15. Verses three and four show us how completely Paul puts verses 1 and 2 into practice in his own life and heart. He is a *servant of Christ*. He is God's *steward*. He serves the Lord—not himself, not others. Consider your attitudes in your areas of service. To what degree do you seek the approval of men or even from yourself? And how does knowing the Lord examines your motives for service encourage you?

16. What command does Paul give at the beginning of verse 5?

17. What will happen at the proper time—the time of judgment—according to verse 5? See also Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 10:18.

18. What kind of judgment will believers face? See Rom. 8:1; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:6-10.

19. What were the Corinthians guilty of concerning their spiritual leaders according to verses 1-5? See also 1 Cor. 9:3-7.

20. The believers at Corinth weren't the only ones to engage in this past-time. What do you learn happened in Thessalonica? See 1 Thess. 2:3-6.

21. What warnings are contained in this portion of Scripture (verses 1-5) for us today?

22. How have you been tempted to judge the leaders in our church, compare them with one another, or prefer one leader over another to an extreme? Why does the Lord want us to refrain from these practices and attitudes? See 1 Cor. 3:5-9.

23. This section of Scripture contains the answer to this problem within our churches. Review verses 1-5 and identify how we can think rightly about our church leaders.

24. Then each man's praise will come to him from God. How is that phrase a motivation for you when it comes to being a servant of Christ? Of being a faithful steward? Of considering whom you work for and why? Of maintaining a right attitude toward those who minister the Word of God to you?

Do we sufficiently realize that the great master force in any life is desire, not intellect, not volition, not emotion, but desire? What do we want? What are we after? What is that inner counsel of the heart—which all the time is illuminating or darkening our understanding, or inspiring our action? There is coming a day when the hidden counsels of the heart will be made manifest, and in that day “each man shall have his praise from God.” That will be the day of vindication for very many misjudged people. We go around judging, and we do not know anything, and had better shut our mouths. There is a day coming when the inner counsels of the hearts will be brought to light, and Paul says all opinions wait for that great day. ~ G. Campbell Morgan¹

¹G. Campbell Morgan, *The Corinthian Letters of Paul*, Fleming H. Revell Company. London and Edinburgh, 1946. Pgs. 72-73.