

Calvary Chapel of El Cajon Women's Bible Studies

1 Corinthians 4

Lesson 8

In this chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul presents three pictures of himself as a *servant of Christ* – a *steward*, a *spectacle*, and a *father*. May we see his heart as he challenges the believers in Corinth to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit and be challenged ourselves to examine the sincerity of our own walks.

DAY ONE: Read 1 Corinthians 4

1. Read through this week's verses using both your Observation Worksheets and another Bible translation or paraphrase. After reading through these verses, what would you say to someone if they asked you what they were about?

- a. 1 Corinthians 4 has been divided into four sections. List below the subject(s) covered in each section.

Verses 1-5

Verses 6-13

Verses 14-17

Verses 18-21

How would you title each section? Record your titles on the **Chapter & Paragraph Division Titles Chart** provided with your Observation Worksheet.

After titling each segment division, record a title for chapter 4.

2. At the right-hand side of the same chart are columns labeled **Key Word** and **Symbol**. They have been provided for you to record the key words and the symbol you have chosen to represent each one. Record the key words listed below and their symbols on the chart.

Used in prior homework lesson: *God, Jesus, Paul* and *the recipients of the letter*.

New to this lesson: *judge(d,s)* and *puffed up*.

Now, using the symbols you have chosen, mark each of the key words each time they are used in 1 Corinthians 4. Remember, as you mark the words *God, Jesus,* and *Paul* any personal pronouns that refer to them. You do not need to mark every word that refers them – only those that you feel are significant.

3. 1 Corinthians 4 contains three terms of conclusion (2 *therefore's* and 1 *for this reason*). A "term of conclusion" is a word or phrase that is followed by a conclusion or summary that is being made as a result of something that has been previously stated. Mark the terms of conclusion in verses 5, 16, and 17.
4. Now, using the chart provided with your Observation Worksheets, add any information you feel is pertinent about the **Author(s)**, the **Recipients**, **Problems** and **Commands**.

DAY TWO: Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

1. A question to keep in mind as you study 1 Corinthians 4 is: “How does this paragraph relate to the problems of division and contention over the preferred minister in the Corinthian church?” With this in mind, how does Paul want these believers to *consider* Apollos and him? 1 Corinthians 4:1

2. Thoughtfully print the requirement for *stewards* from 1 Corinthians 4:2.
 - a. Think of this in terms of those who desire to be pastors and teachers. How would you define a *faithful steward*?

3. Paul uses a word (or similar word) three times in verses 3 and 4, which identifies the cause of strife in the church. What is it?
 - a. Record what Paul states about the *judgment* of the following as it concerns him:
 - 1.) to be *judged by you*
 - 2.) *I do not even judge*
 - 3.) *He who judges me is*
 4. *My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent...* (1 Corinthians 4:4 NIV). Why not? See Psalm 19:12 and Psalm 139:23,24 for your answer.
 - a. *...It is the Lord who judges me* (1 Corinthians 4:4 NIV). Is that a good or a bad thought to you? Why?

5. Read verse 5. *Therefore* (in response to 1 Corinthians 4:1-4) what are they to do?
 - a. What will happen when the *Lord comes*? verse 5

6. Reflect on the *motives of your heart* in relationship to verse 5. How is this a deterrent for judging?

DAY THREE: Read 1 Corinthians 4:6-9

1. In his concern that they not be *puffed up on behalf of one against the other*, Paul used himself and Apollos as examples (verse 6). Using your own words, record from 1 Corinthians 4:7 the three questions that Paul asked.

a. Answer these questions using James 1:17.

b. How do these questions personally challenge your estimation of yourself?

2. Now in verse 8,9 Paul resorts to irony or sarcasm. He contrasts the Corinthians *puffed up* estimation of themselves *you have reigned as kings* with his description of the apostles *as a spectacle to the world* (men on the lowest rung of the world's ladder). The Corinthians were living as if they were already on their thrones in heaven while the apostles were enduring great suffering. In Paul's absence they had forgotten their calling. According to the following verses how should we be behaving?

a. Philippians 1:27:

b. Philippians 2:12:

1.) How quickly behavior can change in the absence of a godly influence. What warning can you personally apply here?

DAY FOUR: Read 1 Corinthians 4:10-13

1. Continue Paul's contrast of the *puffed up* Corinthians with the apostle's example of humility in 1 Corinthians 4:10:

you are	we are

2. It was much easier for the Corinthians to sit in the church assembly and be contentious than to be on the front lines presenting the gospel to people who despised and rejected the apostles even to the point of buffeting. As you list the sufferings and deprivations of the apostles from 1 Corinthians 4:11, think of the things they endured to bring the gospel.

3. Not only did they *labor, working with their own hands*, they followed Christ's example in suffering. Observe the apostle's reactions by completing the chart below (1 Corinthians 4:12,13):

<i>being</i>	<i>we</i>
<i>being</i>	<i>we</i>
<i>being</i>	<i>we</i>

- a. How does this example of suffering follow the pattern of Christ from 1 Peter 2:21-23?

4. In what ways has your love for Jesus provoked you to endure more than you would have before you were a believer?

*"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you,
and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.
Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven,
for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- Matthew 5:11,12*

DAY FIVE: Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

1. Paul's purpose in writing these things is revealed in 1 Corinthians 4:14. By contrasting their lives and walk with the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, he wanted them to recognize that their own *puffed up* attitudes and behavior were not consistent with the new life in Christ they were supposed to be living. Write what he says about this from 1 Corinthians 4:14.

2. Paul had *begotten them through the gospel* (verse 15). He had lead them to a believing faith in Christ. *Therefore*, what did he *urge them to do?* verse 16
 - a. According to 1 Corinthians 11:1, what was to be their criteria?

3. Read 1 Corinthians 4:17. Why had Paul *sent Timothy* to them?

a. What did Paul write about Timothy in Philippians 2:20?

1.) Why do you think this was so important to Paul?

4. According to 1 Corinthians 4:18, why were some of these Corinthians *puffed up*?

a. Contrast their attitude with Timothy's faithfulness. What do you see?

5. *But I will come – and soon – if the Lord will let me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people are just big talkers or whether they really have God's power* (1 Corinthians 4:19 NLT). Fill in the blanks from verse 20 that reveal what the *kingdom of God* is and is not.

For the kingdom of God is not in _____ but in _____.

a. Paul was not so interested in these believers' words. He wanted to know if there was *power*. What do you think Paul would be looking for in the Corinthians that would reveal the *power* of God in their lives?

6. What choice did Paul offer them in verse 21?

a. What do you think would be the deciding factor?

b. Disciplining of believers is painful for one who truly loves his people, but it is necessary when there is division and contention. Describe Paul's motive using 2 Corinthians 10:8 (using another translation may be helpful ☺).

DAY SIX: Review 1 Corinthians 4

1. Remembering that Paul's exhortation was to the proud and carnal individuals who were causing contentions, share one key truth from 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 about judging others.

2. In what way do verses 6,7 speak to you about your own abilities and the abilities of others?
 - a. What will you do differently because of this?

3. 1 Corinthians 4:8-14 reminds us of the suffering the apostles endured to declare the gospel. Share one thing that impacted you from this section.

4. What is one way you could imitate the example of a Christian that you know?

*His lord said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant;
you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.
Enter into the joy of your lord.*

-Matthew 25:21

Scripture References for Lesson 8

DAY TWO:

Psalm 19:12 Who can understand *his* errors? Cleanse me from secret *faults*.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

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

DAY THREE:

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

Philippians 1:27 Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

DAY FOUR:

1 Peter 2:21-23

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²²"Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; ²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

Matthew 5:11-12

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. ¹²Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

DAY FIVE:

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

Philippians 2:20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state.

2 Corinthians 10:8 For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed--

1 Corinthians 4:19 But I will come-and soon-if the Lord will let me, and then I'll find out whether these arrogant people are just big talkers or whether they really have God's power.

DAY SIX:

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well *done*, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'