

1 Corinthians

Wisdom & Unity

Meeting the demands of
Christian life and living



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Starting where
you are:

Any questions?

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1 Corinthians 4 – Models for Maturation

Paul continues persuading believers in Corinth to unite in the Gospel, in word and deed. To do so, he turns their attention toward Apollos and himself. This rhetorical strategy is an indirect way to convince the Corinthians of how far they have yet to grow.

If his readers can see themselves in Paul's examples and associations, then by the power of God they can correct their course.

Chapter Outline

- Faithfulness personified (4:1-5)
- Fools for Christ (4:6-13)
- A call to discipleship (4:14-21)

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 – Faithfulness Personified

- Servants and stewards
 - Christ's servants → Ministers as “under-rowers” of Christ's church
 - God's stewards → Ministers as “managers” of God's mysteries
- What makes a good steward
 - Faithful to the mysteries of God (*see 4:1*)
 - Faithful among the people of God (*see 4:3-5*)

1 Corinthians 4:1-5 – Faithfulness Personified *(cont'd)*

- Illustration of accountability
 - Lack of credible, opposing human witnesses
 - Lack of will/skill/credibility to judge oneself
 - The Lord is the only credible and capable judge (*Romans 14:4-13*)
 - **Application:** Trust God to judge based upon God's revelatory acumen
 - Frees the people from assuming they have this right. The minister is not the church's hireling.
 - Forces the minister to remember that God has this right. The minister is not the boss.

1 Corinthians 4:6-13 – Fools for Christ

- Faithful stewards (6-7a)
 - United in purpose
 - Resist prideful and divisive associations

- Recipients of grace (7b-8)

- Lacking creature comforts (9-13)

Note: While Paul's "sufferings" were likely his reality, the sarcasm in this section is intended to reflect the spiritual immaturity of the Corinthians, as seen in their view of themselves and Paul.

- Living to die
- Lacking in wisdom and strength
- Lacking basic life necessities

1 Corinthians 4:14-21 – A Call to Discipleship

- Unite under wise leadership (4:14-17)
 - Follow the one whose love is as of a parent, not a tutor
 - A singular, consistent presence v. multiple, temporary influences
 - A worthy model
 - Emulation as a tool for maturity and unity
 - Constant care
- Unite through demonstrations of maturity (4:18-21)
 - Products of pride vs. Products of power
 - “Get your house in order”

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