

The Judgment that Matters | 1 Corinthians 4:1-6

- Verse 1 –
 - Paul says, "This is how an individual should think of us..."
 - In context, **us** must be Paul and **Sosthenes our brother** (1 Cor. 1:1).
 - These two should be thought of as **stewards of the mysteries of God**.
 - Since Paul uses the plural **us**, the role of a steward is not limited to the Apostleship.
 - The Greek word translated stewards is important. The word οἰκονόμος [oikonomos] is the word from which we get *dispensation*. It is a compound word literally meaning "house rule." An *oikonomia* is a dispensation (or the *house law* or *economy*), and the *oikonomos* is the person who is the administrator of the *house law*.
 - Note that **mysteries of God** is plural. While dispensationalists speak of *the mystery*, there is more than one, and the content of the mystery must be taken by context. However, each of these mysteries are under the present spiritual economy.
 - In summary, Paul could have said, "think of us as the guardians of the mysteries of the age of grace."
 - While Paul was the apostle of this age, each of us could be considered guardians of the mysteries. See, for example, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 1:7, 2 Timothy 2:2.
- Verse 2 –
 - With the confusion in the church today about this dispensation, one would have to question the faithfulness of the church to the truths of the current dispensation.
 - Compare Matthew 24:45, Luke 12:42, 16:1-2, etc.
 - Note also that a good steward cannot be a menpleaser: Galatians 1:10.
 - Perhaps the great problem in the church today is that the **stewards** are trying to accomplish agendas rather than be faithful to protect and proclaim **the mysteries of God**.
- Verses 3-4 –
 - In regards to being a faithful steward, it is not the Corinthians who make the judgment of faithfulness.
 - If the Corinthians made their own judgment, it was **a very small thing** for Paul, and he did not become preoccupied with their analysis.
 - Furthermore, it is not of any **man's judgment** (literally, *I am not judged by man's day*, that is, "the analysis of today may not be the final analysis"). Compare Romans 14:4.
 - When Paul says **I judge not mine own self**, he is not saying that he does not contemplate and evaluate his own work, but rather is saying, "I haven't found myself guilty in stewardship (v. 3) I am conscious of no mishandling of the mysteries (v. 4)." The reason Paul doesn't judge himself is because **he that judgeth me is the Lord**.
- Verse 5 –
 - The church would do well to recognize that it is not our function to be "judge and jury."
 - If a man's conscience doesn't convict him, we will probably not be able to do so either.
 - The word of God is **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**. When we teach Scripture, it does its own internal work in the hearts of those who hear it.
 - We should **judge nothing before the time**, and in that day the Lord will be the Judge.
 - In the day of judgment, **every man shall have praise of God**. Thus, in paraphrased summary, *let God praise every man when the time comes*.

- Verse 6 –
 - **And these things, brethren** - An interpretive matter: are **these things** the *things of judgment* (vv. 3-5) or the **mysteries of God** (v. 1)? Most likely it is the immediate context of judgment of others.
 - **I have in a figure transferred** - This is a single Greek word, μετασχηματίζω [metaschamatizo]. Typically the word is translated *transformed*, and it has to do with the *schema*, which is the internal form (rather than the *morphe*, the external.) Paul is using **these things... as a figure** or an illustration.
 - **that ye might learn...** - There must have been a spirit of undo allegiance of men within the church even beyond the divisions between Apollos, Paul, Cephas, etc. Paul has taken the himself and Apollos now **as a figure** asking the Corinthians, "do you see Apollos and I judging one another? Comparing one another? Competing against one another?"

Paul Chastises the Corinthians | 1 Corinthians 3:7-13

- Verse 7 – Paul begins to correct the thinking of the Corinthians who had divided themselves among leadership. He reminds them that they are dependent upon revelation, not upon human ingenuity, creativity, and skill.
- Verse 8 - Here Paul speaks sarcastically, using exaggerated and animated speech.
 - Compare 2 Corinthians 11:1 and Galatians 5:12, where Paul states that he is using this form of rhetoric.
 - When he says, **I would to God ye did reign**, he continues the sarcasm, as if he were saying, "I wish you were as good in reality as you are in your own mind!"
- Verses 9-13 - Paul gives a litany of rebuke for the Corinthians who live in fullness and riches (v. 8) while the Apostles (under whom they are claiming allegiance) are in suffering. The tone is continues with the sarcasm of v. 8.
 - Note on verse 11 – **even unto this present hour** - Paul started his ministry in Corinth under distress and persecution (1 Cor. 2:3), but after he departed the Corinthians came to some degree of comfort and prosperity. Paul, however, continued in distress and persecution **unto this present hour**. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-33 he will give the list of his persecutions.

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