

## 1Corinthians – Week 17

### I. Quick Review: The Role of Church Leaders

#### A. In chapter 4, Paul addresses how we should regard those who “plant” and “water”...

##### i. Regard them as servants (“*huperetes*”)

1. The word originally meant “*an under-rower*,” referring to the slaves who were chained to the rowing benches in the bottom tier of the Roman war ships.
  - a. These unseen men labored together under the direction of their master.
  - b. Paul says that he and other teachers are lowly, even unpopular servants under the direction of their Master, Jesus Christ.
    - i. They are servants of God, not of men.

##### ii. Regard them as stewards

1. Stewards manage their master’s affairs (whether in the home or in their business)
  - a. They seek the interests of God, not men.
2. They must be trustworthy, that is, faithful to God...
  - a. Faithfulness involves...

- i. Excellence – A faithful person not only does things, but does them well.
- ii. Integrity – A faithful person practices what he preaches.
- iii. Dependability – A faithful person is reliable. He gets the work done.
- iv. Perseverance – A faithful person perseveres to the finish.

##### iii. It mattered little to Paul what others thought of him.

1. Paul’s desire was to be found pleasing to God (2Cor. 5:9)
2. He followed the counsel that he gave to his spiritual son, Timothy, when he said, “*Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved...*” (2 Timothy 2:15).

##### iv. We are not to pronounce judgment on God’s servants and stewards because God will properly determine whether or not his servants had been faithful.

1. It is easy to judge God’s servants because one can only see their external character and not see what is going on behind the scenes or why things are done the way they are being done.
2. Of course, Paul is not saying we should not judge the actions of people who do wrong because in chapter 5, he is going to expose a brother who needs to be excommunicated for his evil behavior.
3. He is merely saying, in context, not to be judging the servants of God by assuming you know them inside out based on assumptions. God is the only One who knows all of us inside out.

### II. Continuation

#### A. How do we keep from boasting in the wrong things?

##### i. 1Corinthians 4:6 (ESV), “*I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another.*”

##### 1. Paul had used various illustrations to describe himself and Apollos:

- a. Mere farmers, builders, servants, and stewards.
2. To exceed what God has written would be to go beyond the teaching of the Scriptures.

##### a. And what has been written? That man’s wisdom is nothing before God

##### b. Paul quoted several OT passages proven this to be so...

- i. Isa. 29:14 (1Cor. 1:19) – God destroys man’s wisdom!
- ii. Jer. 9:23-24 (1Cor. 1:31) – Do not boast in man’s wisdom, power or riches, but boast in the Lord!

- iii. Isa. 64:4 (1Cor. 2:9) – No mind has conceived what the Lord has prepared for those who love Him.
    - iv. Isa. 40:13 (1Cor. 2:16) – Who can instruct the Lord?
    - v. Job 5:13 (1Cor. 3:19) – God catches the wise in their craftiness (they cannot fool God)
    - vi. Ps. 94:11 (1Cor. 3:20) – The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are foolishness.
  - c. Allowing the Scriptures to mold our thinking will keep us from being puffed up by exalting one teacher over another.
    - i. It is interesting to note that they were not “puffing up” their teachers, but rather, “puffing up” themselves by associating themselves with certain teachers.
- ii. Paul gives the Corinthians three rhetorical questions, designed to damage their puffed up egos...
  - 1. 1Corinthians 4:7 (ESV), *“For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”*
    - a. Are you more “special” than others?
      - i. You are who you are because of God! (cf. 1Cor. 1:26-29)
    - b. Who gave you what you have? The teachers? Your spiritual gifts? Your talents? Your salvation? Etc.
      - i. Everything you have comes from God!
    - c. So why are you acting as if this weren’t so?
    - d. Therefore, be grateful, not puffed up!
    - e. Boast in the Lord! (1Cor. 1:31)
- iii. Paul goes on denouncing their attitude with sarcasm...
  - 1. 1Corinthians 4:8 (ESV), *“Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!”*
    - a. Such is the attitude of those who think they have “arrived!”
      - i. Already you have all you want!
        - 1. That is, like a person filled with food, you feel you don’t need to be fed spiritual food anymore. You have arrived!
      - ii. You are rich!
        - 1. Like a rich man who doesn’t feel a need, you feel that you are filled-to-the-max with spiritual wisdom and maturity!
      - iii. Without us you have become kings!
        - 1. Like a king who feels he has reached the highest level and doesn’t need counsel and instruction, you feel that you don’t need your gospel father (or teachers like Apollos) to tell you what you must do!
        - 2. You see yourselves already perfected, passing the fire of judgment, receiving commendation from God, and sitting on thrones, reigning as kings! (cf. 2Tim 2:12)
        - 3. Oh, I wish this were true, because, if it were, then we would be reigning beside you!
    - b. Paul does this so that they may repent from their pride and become humble, broken, and transparent people.
  - 2. Next the passages outline what Paul’s life as an apostle was really like. We will cover this, Lord willing, in our next class.