

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

LEADERS ARE CALLED TO BE SERVANTS NOT SUPERSTARS

- “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ...” (1 Cor. 4:1a)
- True leadership begins with a posture of servanthood to Christ and His Church. (See Mark 10:42-45)
- The constant temptation to seek titles and affirmation can lead to dire consequences for the “leader” and division in God’s Church.

LEADERS ARE ENTRUSTED TO “MANAGE” THE “MYSTERIES OF GOD” WELL

- “This, then, is how you ought to regard us: ...as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” (1 Corinthians 4:1b-2)
- “The mysteries of God” = the Gospel, and sound doctrine
- When church members truly understand that ministers are “managers” of God’s Church and His message, it should lead to a proper commitment of followership.
- “Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.” (Hebrews 13:7)
- Christians are called to submit to godly leaders, but not to worship them.

LEADERS WILL HAVE TO ANSWER TO GOD FOR HOW THEY LEAD THE PEOPLE OF GOD

- “I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me.” (1 Corinthians 4:3-4)
- While not perfect, godly leaders strive to live in such a way that they honor the Lord above everything, including the opinions of others.
- “Obey your leaders and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” (Hebrews 13:17)
- Godly leaders are not concerned with the opinions of others because they know that God will judge them righteously.

WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE AND JUDGE LEADERS UNJUSTLY

- “Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.” (1 Corinthians 4:5)
- **Facing criticism is a part of walking faithfully with Jesus, but we are called to avoid judging motives and applying judgement that belongs to God alone.**
- “A critical spirit and a condemning attitude in the church are like cancer to the human body. If they are allowed to spread, fatality may result.” – Dr. Akin
- **Two things are true about divine judgement: 1) God “will bring to light what is hidden in darkness, 2) God “will expose the motives of the heart.”**
- **God will show His love and praise for each leader at the appointed time in spite of their flaws, because that what a loving Father does.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation

- According to verse 1, how does Paul want the Corinthians to view him and other church leaders?
- In verse 2, what is required of those who have been “entrusted with the mysteries of God”?
- According to verse 5, who is ultimately responsible for judging the motives and work of every person, including leaders?

Understanding

- What are some ways that the church can be tempted to elevate leaders as celebrities instead of servants?
- How can we guard our own hearts from craving recognition or praise when we serve?
- How can you be faithful in managing what God has entrusted to you—your time, relationships, gifts, or influence?
- How can remembering that “it is the Lord who judges” help you stay humble and focused when others misunderstand or question your motives?
- Why do you think Paul warned believers not to “judge before the appointed time”?
- How can we build a church culture that practices accountability without falling into a critical or condemning spirit?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?