



**DISCIPLINED
BY THE FATHER**
1 Corinthians 4

4: Disciplined by the Father (1 Corinthians 4)

Good fathers can't sit back and allow the children they love to disobey without confronting what is false and correcting with truth. Today we are reminded of a wonderful, inescapable reality - God's children will be disciplined by the Father.

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teachingnotes

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VISUAL NOTES



BIG TRUTH: A good father confronts what is false and corrects with the truth.

A good earthly father teaches his children that they will be disciplined by our good Heavenly Father.

Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV)

My son, do not despise the LORD'S [YaHWeH's] discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, because **the LORD [YaHWeH] disciplines those He loves**, as a father the son he delights in.

The Heart of a Spiritual Father

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 (NIV)

This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as **servants of Christ** and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that **those who have been given a trust must prove faithful**.

As you'll remember from last week, Paul refers to himself and Apollos as fellow farmers and master builders who work together by the power of God's Spirit to grow and build God's Church.

These men are **servants** of Jesus are serious about accomplishing what He has **entrusted** them to do - to take care the Landowner's house until He comes back. God had **entrusted** them as managers (CSB)/stewards (NET, ESV) to be faithful to distribute God's truth to the rest of God's servants. These men **have been given a trust** and **must prove faithful** as their work WILL be judged by the Master upon His return. Paul & Apollos are a lot more concerned about what the Master thinks about how they are doing their job than what the other servants under their authority are saying.

TAKE SOME NOTES HERE

God Sees the Motives

1 Corinthians 4:3-5 (NIV)

I care very little if I am judged¹ by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. **It is the Lord who judges me.** Therefore judge² 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.

Paul isn't saying leaders aren't accountable. In fact, he recognizes that he is MORE accountable than others.

- James writes "Not many should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we will receive a stricter judgment." (James 3:1 NIV)

Paul is NOT concerned about the judgment of the immature believers in Corinth, but he is ever mindful that **it is the Lord who judges me.** Even though he thinks his **conscience is clear**, he knows that Jesus **will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart.** His true intentions are known to God.

- Our motives will be exposed as well. Maybe we are way too concerned about what people think rather than facing the Righteous Judge and Creator of all.

❓ *What if we started living like we were actually going to face our Creator who will uncover WHY do do WHAT we do?*

The word "judgment" most often causes us to think of something negative, but this will be a **time** when **each will receive their PRAISE from God.** This same term meaning **praise, commend, or approve,** is sometimes mentioned in the New Testament in regards to

- people praising other people (Rm 13:3, 2 Cor 8:18, 1 Pet 2:14)
- people praising God (Mt 9:8, 15:31, Lk 1:64, 7:16, Eph 1:6, 12, 14; Phil 1:11, 1 Pet 1:7)
- Here it is God who will praise people, when the King says "Well done! I'm proud of you!" (Lk 19:17). That's what Paul is looking forward to and that's what WE can be looking forward to as well...IF..."we make it our goal to please Him". (2 Cor 5:9).

Leadership = Follow Our Example

1 Corinthians 4:6 (NIV)

Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so **that you may learn from us** the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other.

Some say that the phrase, "Do not go beyond what is written" is referring to:

- The Old Testament Scriptures.
- Words that Paul has previously written to the Church in this letter or the previous letter (1 Cor 5:9).
- Others offer in intriguing idea: Paul is referring to instructing children how to write, teaching them to imitate how their teachers write, not making the letters too big or too small.³ The church is to **not go beyond** what Paul and the other apostles had modeled for their students, to follow their example rather than doing their own thing.

Paul and Apollos don't want the Corinthian Church to be **puffed up**, prideful followers who make it look like Paul and Apollos are competitors rather than brothers. But there were some **puffed up** people attempting to grab the reigns of this struggling church.

Who Gave You What You've Got?

1 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)

For who makes you different from anyone else? **What do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, **why do you boast** as though you did not?

While you can use and improve what you've got, most of what you've got is stuff you can't **boast** about.

What do you have that you did not receive? Not much.

Some of these Corinthians have been so puffed up, so arrogant, that they needed a spiritual spanking. But Paul doesn't spank them and walk away, because **a good father confronts what is false and corrects with the truth.**

¹ *anakrinō* investigated/evaluated

² *krinō* - decide/give verdict

³ Charles H. Talbert, Reading Corinthians: A Literary and Theological Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2002), 20–21.

Contrasting Counterfeit Counterparts

1 Corinthians 4:8 (NIV)

Already you have all you want! Already **you have become rich! You have begun to reign**—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you!

1 Corinthians 4:9 (NLT)

Instead, I sometimes think God has put us apostles on display, like prisoners of war at the end of a victor's parade, condemned to die. We have become a spectacle to the entire world—to people and angels alike.

Paul uses imagery that people in the Roman Empire understood. The victorious army was welcomed home by crowds as the General and his troops marched at the front of the parade. The **prisoners of war**, chained and forced to march **at the end of the victor's parade**, were mocked and spit on by the people. Many of these conquered foes would be **condemned to die** in the arena, where they would be made a public **spectacle**, torn apart by wild animals or gutted by gladiators.

Persecuted Apostles & Comfortable Corinthians

1 Corinthians 4:10-13 (NIV)

We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! **We are weak**, but you are strong!

You are honored, **we are dishonored!** To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, **we bless**; when we are persecuted, **we endure** it; when we are slandered, **we answer kindly**. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

Following Jesus means some will view us as **the scum of the earth** and **garbage of the world**. Following Jesus isn't always easy not always comfortable. Following Jesus means **we bless** when **cursed**, **we endure** when persecuted, and **we answer kindly** when **slandered**,

God's approval is not always evidenced by prosperity, but by persecution. Jesus was treated unkindly and His followers can expect the same thing. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus said:

John 15:20 (NIV) Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also.

Many of these Corinthians weren't facing persecution because they were living for *COMFORT* rather than for *CHRIST*, so Paul has do what what a good father does, and...

A good father confronts what is false and corrects with the truth.

Reaffirming a Father's Love

1 Corinthians 4:14-16 (NIV)

I am writing this not to shame you but to warn you as **my dear children**. Even if you had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore **I urge you to imitate me**.

In our day, Paul might have said, "You've had lots of baby sitters, but only one father." Paul is their spiritual **father** who loves these people and longs to see them grow in Jesus. Paul is NOT a hypocritical parent of saying "Do as I say, not as I do." He is spiritual **father** modeling how he expects his spiritual children to act.

❓ **WHO are YOU imitating and...WHO is imitating YOU?**

Faithful Examples of Faith Expectations

1 Corinthians 4:17 (NIV)

For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, **who is faithful in the Lord**. He will remind you of **my way of life in Christ Jesus**, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

Timothy is faithful in the Lord, a living example walking among the Corinthian Church who would show them Paul's **way of life in Christ Jesus**. Paul had modeled this lifestyle for Timothy. Timothy was modeling the lifestyle for others who would then follow his example and share with the next generation.

❓ Who has been **faithful in the Lord** to show you how to live for Jesus...and...who are YOU showing what it means to be **faithful in the Lord**?

Timothy's life and lips would **remind** the Corinthians of Paul's teaching & practices, the standards that every believer, everywhere, is to abide by.

One Last Warning

1 Corinthians 4:18-21 (NIV)

Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you. But I will come to you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit?

God expects and empowers spiritual leaders to model godly living and hold others to the same standard. All of us whom the Father loves WILL be disciplined, because...

BIG TRUTH: A good father confronts what is false and corrects with the truth.

❓ How has rejecting or responding to God's discipline impacted you?

- hope, purpose, & forgiveness?
- or doubt, discouragement, & shame?

Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV)

My son, do not despise the LORD'S [YaHWeH's] discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, because **the LORD [YaHWeH] disciplines those He loves**, as a father the son he delights in.

PRAY: "What to you want me to do with what I heard today?"

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Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives:** Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Explain your answer.
2. **Read Proverbs 3:11-12.** Although no one enjoys being confronted or corrected, why is God's discipline a good thing in our lives? Why should a person be concerned if God does not discipline them?
3. **Read 1 Cor 4:3-5.** As you consider the day that Jesus will judge the motives of your heart, what concerns, questions, or encouraging thoughts come to your mind?
4. **Read 1 Cor 4:6-7.** Why should believers be humble instead of boastful? Take a moment and point out some of the gifts God has given to the other people involved in this discussion.
5. **Read 1 Cor 4:14-17.** Who are your fathers or mothers in the faith, people who are "faithful in the Lord" - good examples to follow? What have you learned from their "way of life in Christ Jesus"? Why is it that so many Christians would say, "Don't follow my example."? What will happen if no one purposefully models what it means to love and follow Jesus?
6. How has rejecting or responding to God's discipline impacted you - hope, purpose, & forgiveness or doubt, discouragement, & shame?
7. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.** Continue to pray for our Supreme Court decision on Roe v Wade. Pray for Christians in Ukraine and Russia to carry the message of Jesus with them wherever they go.