



TEACH ME
THE BIBLE PODCAST

STUDY GUIDE

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CHAPTER

4

1 CORINTHIANS

Divisions in the Church



1 Corinthians: Chapter 4

If you are new to the Story of the Bible or would like to review the Story:
Listen to the following TMTB Podcasts:

The Story: Understanding the “Big Story” (30 min)

Old Testament: Walk Through the Broad Story (27 min)

Timeline: New Testament Beginnings (35 min)

Letters: Paul’s Writing to the Churches–Part 1 (30 min)

REVIEW

In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul continues to lay out his argument. Paul and Apollos should not be the source of divisions in the church at Corinth. Instead, they are servants of Christ and stewards of the “mysteries of God” (i.e., God’s revelation). Thus, Paul considers it a “small thing” to be “examined” by the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:3). In fact, Paul will explain himself against their “examination” in the coming chapters. First however, Paul must set the record straight by instructing the Corinthians (with a bit of sarcasm) that they have judged Paul and Apollos incorrectly. Instead, the Corinthians should be examining themselves.



1 Corinthians: Chapter 4

DAY 1

Read 1 Corinthians 4 and Isaiah 49.

Listen to this week's Podcast (24 min) and read along as David reads 1 Corinthians 4 and walks through Paul's words to the church at Corinth. Paul's words expose the flaw in Corinthians' "examination" of him and instruct them to correctly regard him as their father in the LORD.

- What two words does Paul use to describe his role in 1 Corinthians 4:1? How are the Corinthians misunderstanding Paul's role (00:01:50-00:03:42)?
- Isaiah 49 explains Paul's understanding of "servant". Who serves whom and for what purpose (00:03:42)?
- What does Paul mean in 1 Corinthians 4:6 when he exhorts the Corinthians not to "exceed what is written" (00:11:00)?
- While Paul's words may seem harsh, explain how he is acting graciously toward the Corinthians in view of the day of judgment (1 Cor 4:5). What three things does Paul point to that need to be corrected in the Corinthians' thinking (00:22:04- 00:22:22)?

DAY 2

Paul uses two analogies in 1 Corinthians to make his point that the church is to be unified. (Paul uses the same two analogies in Romans and Ephesians). One analogy is that the church is the "body of Christ." The second analogy is that the church is a "building" or "temple."

The words for:

- **"building"** (Greek noun: oikodome),
 - **"dwells"** (Greek verb: oikeo),
 - **"build"** (Greek verb: oikodomeo),
 - **"servant"** (Greek noun: oikonomos), and
 - **"stewardship"** (Greek noun: oikonomia)
- all utilize the Greek noun for:
- **"house"** (Greek noun: oikos).

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9, 10, 12, 14, 16; 4:1-2; 8:1 (may be translated "edifies" but means "builds up"); 9:17 (translated "stewardship"); 10:23; 11:22, 34; 14:3, 4, 5, 12, 17, 26, 35.

Explain how the verses listed above all relate to Paul's argument of unity and the building up or edification of the church, the body of Christ?



1 Corinthians: Chapter 4

DAY 3

Remember back to 1 Corinthians 2:12 where Paul states, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God (revealed through the apostles), for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

The word for “appraised” (Greek verb: anakrino) is the same word that Paul uses throughout his letter to the Corinthians.

Track Paul’s argument through 1 Corinthians by reading: 2:14-15; 4:3-4; 9:3; 10:25, 27; and 14:24

In chapters 2 and 3, Paul has argued that he has revealed the word of the LORD to the Corinthians. Moreover, this word of the LORD/gospel of Christ is foolishness to the Gentiles and a stumbling block to the Jews. The problem with the Corinthians is that they are “judging” incorrectly.

The word “appraised” or “examined” comes from the root word “to judge” (Greek verb: krino). The root word is used 41 times in 1 Corinthians.

Track Paul’s argument by reading: 2:2, 13, 14, 15 (2x); 4:3, 4, 5, 7; 5:3, 8, 12, 13; 6:1, 2 (3x), 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; 7:37; 9:3; 10:5, 25, 27, 29; 11:13, 29 (2x), 31 (2x), 34; 12:10; 14:24, 29.

- How are the Corinthians “judging” or “examining” incorrectly?
- How should they be judging?
- Whose example should they follow and why?

DAY 4

In 1 Corinthians 4:6 Paul states, “Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that none of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.”

Track the word “arrogant” through the book by reading: 1 Cor 4:6,19; 5:2; 8:1 and 13:4.

- Remember back to chapter 1 and Paul’s use of “wisdom” and “foolish,” “weakness” and “strength.” He has again returned to these same subjects. Explain what is going on.
- Whom does Paul call “weak” and “foolish”?
- Why do the Corinthians view themselves as “wise” and “strong”?
- Are the Corinthians correct in their view? Why or why not?
- How does this discussion relate to chapter 12?
- How do these passages relate to Paul’s correction of the Corinthian church?



1 Corinthians: Chapter 4

DAY 5

In 1 Corinthians 4:17 Paul states, “Therefore, I exhort you, be imitators of me.”

- How do these words relate to what Paul says in 4:5, “Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come from God”?
- In chapters 7- 10, Paul will explain his motives. In short, everything that Paul does is for the winning of lost souls and the building up of the body of Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1.

- Can you relate this passage back to Paul’s argument?
- How might this instruct you on how you should live?