

## ***Activating Our Position in Christ***

### ***1 Corinthians 4:1-21***

#### ***Characteristics of a Spiritual Leader***

*Today's lesson/message I've titled, "Characteristics of a Spiritual Leader"*

*We began our study of First Corinthians by looking at the overall focus of the Letter...*

*We saw where there were several problems in the church that were causing serious issues...*

### ***1. A FAITHFUL STEWARD of God's WORD***

*1 Corinthians 4:1–7 (ESV) — This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. 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. 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?*

#### ***➤ His SOURCE***

*1 Corinthians 4:1–2 (ESV) — This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*

*"... the mysteries of God."*

*I believe when a spiritual leader spends time with the Lord, the Holy Spirit will guide him/her into the truths of Scripture...*

*2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) — Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

#### ***➤ His JUDGMENT***

*1 Corinthians 4:3–4 (ESV) — But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.*

*His judgment is NOT people!*

*His judgment is NOT self!*

*His judgment is before THE LORD!*

*James 3:1 (ESV) — Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.*

*Hebrews 13:17a (ESV) — Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account...*

➤ **His RESULTS**

**1 Corinthians 4:1–7 (ESV) — Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. 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. 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?**

***The spiritual growth and development of God's people under the life and teaching of a spiritual leader prove his faithfulness***

**1 Thessalonians 2:19 (ESV) — For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?**

**1. A FAITHFUL STEWARD of God's WORD**

**2. A HUMBLE SURRENDER to God's SPIRIT**

**1 Corinthians 4:8–13 (ESV) — 8 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! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. 10 We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. 11 To the**

**present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, 12 and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.**

➤ **A SENTENCE of DEATH**

**1 Corinthians 4:8–9a (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! For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death ...**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> most often quoted statement by Jesus...**

**Luke 9:23–24 (ESV) — And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.**

**Paul longed for it...**

**Philippians 3:10–11 (NLT) — I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!**

**Paul lived it...**

**Galatians 2:20 (ESV) — 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

**Peter declares it is our calling...**

**1 Peter 2:20b–23 (ESV) — But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.**

➤ **A SPECTACLE in LIFE**

**1 Corinthians 4:8–13 (ESV) — ... we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.**

**The word used for “spectacle” here is the Greek word from which we get our English word, “theatre”.**

**The spiritual leader is ALWAYS “on stage”...**

**We live in a glass house!**

**How the spiritual leader responds to criticism, difficulties, failures, and rejection is on display before a watching world!**

**1. A FAITHFUL STEWARD of God's WORD****2. A HUMBLE SURRENDER to God's SPIRIT****3. A PROTECTIVE SHEPHERD of God's PEOPLE**

**1 Corinthians 4:14–21 (ESV) — 14 I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. 16 I urge you, then, be imitators of me. 17 That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?**

➤ **WARNS of DANGERS**

**1 Corinthians 4:14–15 (ESV) — I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**

→ **STORY OF WARNING KATHY'S DAD (1987)**

**Ezekiel 3:17–21 (ESV) — “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a**

**word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul. Again, if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die. Because you have not warned him, he shall die for his sin, and his righteous deeds that he has done shall not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul.”**

➤ **GUIDES by EXAMPLE**

**1 Corinthians 4:16–17 (ESV) — I urge you, then, be imitators of me. That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church.**

**My Life Verse...**

**Ezra 7:10 (NIV) — For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.**

**Ezra 7:10 (NIV) — For Ezra had devoted himself to the STUDY and OBSERVANCE of the Law of the LORD, and to TEACHING its decrees and laws in Israel.**

**My calling is to ...**

- **Study God’s Word**
- **Live God’s Word**
- **Teach God’s Word to God’s people**

➤ **CONFRONTS and COMFORTS with AUTHORITY**

**1 Corinthians 4:18–21 (ESV) — Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. 21 What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?**

**1 Peter 5:2–4 (ESV) — Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

**Activating Our Position in Christ**  
**1 Corinthians 4:1-21**  
**Characteristics of a Spiritual Leader**

**1. A \_\_\_\_\_ of God's \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **His \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **His \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **His \_\_\_\_\_**

**2. A \_\_\_\_\_ to God's \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **A \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **A \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_**

**3. A \_\_\_\_\_ of God's \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **\_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_**

➤ **\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_**