

**GROW
Healthy
1 Corinthians 4:1-17**

Healthy things grow. I need to make sure that I stay healthy in my spiritual life, just as much as (if not MORE than) in my physical life! Are you healthy spiritually? If not, I have just the prescription this morning!

The church at Corinth was NOT healthy. In fact, they were very sick. There was an illness among them that was a virus. It spread. That virus was PRIDE, and it was killing the church. It will do the same in our ranks if we do not RECOGNIZE IT and TREAT IT properly. Their treatment will work for us as well. Paul was the physician, and he got right to the point in his letter to them. Let's read it together.

1 So then, let us [who minister] be regarded as servants of Christ and stewards (trustees, administrators) of the mysteries of God [that He chooses to reveal].
2 In this case, moreover, it is required [as essential and demanded] of stewards that one be found faithful *and* trustworthy. **3** But [as for me personally] it matters very little to me that I may be judged by you or *any* human court [on this point]; in fact, I do not even judge myself. **4** I am aware of nothing against myself *and* I feel blameless, but I am not by this acquitted [before God]. It is the Lord who judges me. **5** So do not go on **passing judgment** before the appointed time, *but wait* until the Lord comes, for He will both bring to light the [secret] things that are hidden in darkness and disclose the motives of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.
6 Now I have applied these things [that is, the analogies about factions] to myself and Apollos for your benefit, believers, so that you may learn from us not to go beyond what is written [in Scripture], so that none of you will become arrogant *and* boast in favor of one [minister or teacher] against the other. **7** For who regards you as superior *or* what sets you apart as special? What do you have that you did not receive [from another]? And if in fact you received it [from God or someone else], why do you boast as if you had not received it [but had gained it by yourself]?
8 [You behave as if] you are already filled [with spiritual wisdom and in need of nothing more]. Already you have become rich [in spiritual gifts]! You [in your conceit] have ascended your thrones *and* become kings without us; and how I wish [that it were true and] that you did reign as kings, so that we might reign with you. **9** For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles at the end of the line, like men sentenced to death [and paraded as prisoners in a procession], because we have become a spectacle to the world [a show in the world's amphitheater], both to angels and to men. **10** We are [regarded as] fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are highly esteemed, but we are dishonored. **11** To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are *continually* poorly dressed, and we are roughly treated, and wander homeless. **12** We work [for our living], working *hard* with our own hands. When

we are reviled *and* verbally abused, we bless. When we are persecuted, we take it patiently *and* endure. **13** When we are slandered, we *try to be conciliatory and* answer softly. We have become like the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now.

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but to warn *and* advise you as my beloved children. **15** For even if you were to have ten thousand teachers [to guide you] in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers [who led you to Christ and assumed responsibility for you], for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the good news [of salvation]. **16** So I urge you, be imitators of me [just as a child imitates his father]. **17** For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my way of life in Christ [my conduct and my precepts for godly living], just as I teach everywhere in every church.

Get **HUMBLE**

***I am a SERVANT** [Under-rower!]

-It is a PRIVILEGE!

*The power of a servant's WITNESS – **2 Corinthians 6:4 NIV**

4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses.

-Serving tears down walls and opens doors to those who doubt.

-Servants make the MESSAGE desirable! **[Fastest growing church? IRAN!]**

-It is a compelling CALL: **1 Corinthians 9:16 NIV**

16 For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

-God's servants are not CELEBRITIES. **[Vs. 9-13]**

*Their work DEMANDS EVERYTHING from them.

Put on display = "to show forth, declare," is translated "set forth" in 1Cr 4:9, here, a technical term, used for exhibiting gladiators in an arena, "last of all" referring to the grand finale, to make the most thrilling sport for the spectators

***I am a STEWARD [Household Manager]**

-I have been GIFTED. [And those gifts are NOT for ME!]

1 Peter 4:10 NASB

As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

-My stewardship will be MEASURED. **[Vs. 2, 4]**

-My praise will come NOT from men, but from GOD!

Matthew 25:21 – "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"

*Am I looking for the praise of men? **[Cheap reward!]**

***I am NOT a SELF-MADE man! [Vs. 7]**

- What makes YOU special?
- How did you get to be so special? [God also used others to help shape me!]
- *Arrogance makes me RESISTANT to learning from “lesser” saints!
- Why do you act as if you made yourself special?

Stay HUNGRY

***I have not ARRIVED! [Vs. 8] Revelation 3:17 NIV**

17 You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

***Hunger is a BLESSING! Matthew 5:3-6 NIV**

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

***Hunger DRIVES me toward OTHER SAINTS**

- I NEED other saints! [Vs. 9, 16-17]
- *To LEARN from them.
- *To be INSPIRED by them.

Live in HARMONY

Harmony is the CRITICAL EVIDENCE to the world that we are truly HIS!

- *Paul spends 4 chapters in this letter rebuking their division!
- *Paul highlights their COMPARISONS and JUDGMENTAL SPIRIT! [Vs. 5-6]

Harmony blesses brothers who are SUFFERING:

- *Paul's honesty about the apostle's struggles: 1 Corinthians 4:9-13
- Imagine how isolated from the Corinthians he felt due to their arrogance!

Harmony comes from developing a sense of FAMILY: 1 Corinthians 4:14-16

- *Who are you SUBMITTING TO in the family? [Authority structure]
- *Who are you BRINGING INTO the family? (Discipleship)
- *How are you PROTECTING the family? (Loyalty)
- *How are you MODELING FAITH for the family? [Timothy]

