

# **Pastor Search Committee . . . Part 2!**

Our Text: **1 Corinthians 4:1–5** *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.*

Last week we spent some time looking at potential ministers:

- Who they should be
- What is required of them

Today, we will continue to measure our ministers by God's standards by noticing who should evaluate them.

Let's dive in here . . .

## **Who Should Evaluate Them?**

**1 Corinthians 4:3–4** *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.*

Now we know that Paul was not elevating himself above other ministers or above any other Christian. In fact, he taught the opposite . . .

**Philippians 2:3-11** *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.*

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

But what he was saying about his own attitude toward himself should be said by every minister and every Christian . . . **IT IS ONLY A SMALL THING WHEN OUR MINISTRY IS CRITICIZED, OR PRAISED, BY ANY "HUMAN COURT"!!!**

Now let's be clear . . .

- We can benefit a lot from the counsel of a wise, spiritual friend.
- We can even sometimes learn from the criticisms of unbelievers.

- But no human being is qualified to determine the legitimacy, quality, or faithfulness of our work for the Lord!
- We are not even qualified to determine those things for ourselves!

Let's balance that with the fact that matters of outward sin are to be judged:  
***1 Timothy 5:19–21*** *Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear. I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.*

**BUT NO ONE CAN MAKE AN ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE JUDGEMENT AS TO THE FAITHFULNESS OF A PERSON'S HEART, MIND, AND SOUL, AS THEY SERVE GOD!!!**

### **Evaluation Of Others?!**

- No human being, or group of human beings, is qualified to examine and evaluate God's servants.
- Therefore, no Christian, *(and in this context especially God's ministers)*, should be concerned about any such evaluation by mere men!
- Therefore, we cannot get offended when people criticize us.
- We should not get excited when they show false modesty or when they praise us.

We should simply say with Paul:  
***2 Corinthians 3:18*** *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

**This is why our focus always needs to be on our Lord Jesus Christ! He is the only one Who knows everything and can judge rightly!**

**IF WE ARE TRULY A BELIEVER, JESUS SAYS THAT WE ARE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO HIS IMAGE SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WE SEE OR WHAT OTHERS SEE!!!**

Now let's balance this . . .

- A minister of Christ who truly cares cannot be insensitive to the feelings, needs, and opinions of his people.
- A sincere word of appreciation after a sermon is encouraging, and reflects spiritual concern and growth in the listener's life.
- A word of helpful criticism can be a needed corrective and even a blessing.

- **But no minister can remain faithful to his calling if he lets his congregation, or any other human beings, decide how true his motives are or whether he is working within the Lord's will.**

*\*\*\*(Example of criticism of my voice when I first started)\*\*\**

Because other people's knowledge and understanding of the facts are imperfect, **THEIR CRITICISM AND COMPLIMENTS WILL ALWAYS BE IMPERFECT!!!**

Therefore, we cannot allow ourselves to care **"too much"** about other people's evaluations of our ministry.

But we can't trust ourselves either . . .

## **Self Evaluation?!**

- All of us are naturally inclined to build ourselves up in our own minds.
- We all look into rose-colored mirrors.
- Even when we put ourselves down, especially in front of others, we often are simply appealing for recognition and flattery. *(Example: Child saying their picture is ugly.)*

Because we **KNOW** this, **A MATURE MINISTER WILL NOT TRUST HIS OWN JUDGEMENT EITHER!!!**

In other words, because we are sinful, we recognize that our judgment can be as tainted as anyone else's!

So we must allow ourselves to be scrutinized by God's Word **AND CONSIDER WHAT IT IS SAYING!!!**

***Job 13:23*** *How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin.*

***Psalms 32:3-5*** *When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah*

***Psalms 119:59*** *I thought about my ways, And turned my feet to Your testimonies.*

***Lamentations 3:40*** *Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the LORD;*

***Ezekiel 18:27-28*** *Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.*

***Luke 15:11-24*** *Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined*

*himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.*

*“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’*

*“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’*

*“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.*

***1 Corinthians 11:27-31*** *Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

***Galatians 6:3-4*** *For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

***2 Corinthians 13:5*** *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

Simply put, knowing our sin is not enough . . . **ONCE WE KNOW IT WE NEED TO CONFESS IT AND DEAL WITH IT!!!**

*But what if you think you’ve got it down? What if you’re A-OK?*

Paul didn’t know of serious sin or deficiency in his own life:

***1 Corinthians 1:4a*** *For I know of nothing against myself,*

***2 Corinthians 1:12*** *For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

But he did know that he could be wrong in his assessment:

***1 Corinthians 1:4b&c*** *yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.*

***1 Corinthians 10:12*** *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

The bottom line is . . . **WE CAN’T TRUST EVEN OURSELVES!!!**

***“No Christian, no matter how advanced in the faith, is able to properly evaluate his own spiritual life. Before we know it, we will be ranking ourselves, classifying ourselves — and discover that a great deal of time is being spent in thinking of nothing but ourselves. The bias in our own favor and the tendency of***

***the flesh toward self-justification make this a dangerous project. The only evaluation that makes a difference is the Lord's.***” John MacArthur Jr.

**BUT THE SCARY PART IS THAT GOD KNOWS THE TRUTH!!!**

### **God Will Evaluate Them!**

***1 Corinthians 4:5*** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.

God has a day planned when He will both:

- **“Bring to light the hidden things of darkness**
- **And reveal the counsels of the hearts**

**And if this don't cause a lump to move in our throats, NOTHING WILL!!!**

- Those two phrases refer to the attitudes of the inner man, which only God can see.
- Ultimate judgment of every kind, including the evaluation of His servants' ministries, will be by Him and in His time.
- God's people, including the ministers themselves, have no business passing final judgment before that time.
- We see only the outside, the visible, and cannot know what is hidden in the recesses of the soul.

We must also point out that the term **“hidden things of darkness”** doesn't necessarily refer to sin or evil. *How do we know that?*

It also mentions **“each one's praise”**. Since there will be **“praise”** involved, it cannot be evil or sin represented by the darkness . . . (*How would that be praiseworthy?*)

Because of this, we can take the verse to mean that the **“hidden things of darkness”** are just facts that haven't been brought into the light yet. Every believer will have praise, no matter what his works and motives are:

***Romans 8:1*** *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

- All Christians will have some reward and some praise.
- Who will receive much and who will receive little only God knows.
- The wood, hay, and straw will be burned away.
- But the gold, silver, and precious stones will remain.
- Therefore, **GOD WILL BE THE ONE WHO JUDGES AND DOLES OUT THE REWARDS!!!**

We would do well to keep a few things in mind:

- Rewards given will not be based on the degrees behind our name.
- Neither will it be based on the numbers we have preached to or witnessed to.
- The number of programs we have planned and directed will not matter.
- All of the books we have written will not come up.
- Even the number of converts won to Christ through us will not enter the equation.
- **ONLY MOTIVES WILL BE IN VIEW HERE . . . AND NONE OF THAT IS KNOWN TO US!!!**

***“One of the marvelous experiences we will have on that day will be to realize that many dear saints, completely unknown to the world and perhaps hardly known to fellow believers, will receive reward after reward after reward from the Lord’s hands—because their works were of gold, silver, and precious stones. Their hearts will have been pure, their works will have been precious, and their rewards will be great.”***

Because of this, we should have one single solitary purpose:

***1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.***

- It is good when fellow Christians can speak well of us sincerely.
- It is good when our own conscience does not accuse us.
- But it will be wonderful beyond description if, on that day, our Lord can say of us, ***“Well done, good and faithful servant.”***

**God alone will judge, so let’s get out of His way!**

Let’s pray . . .