

# "By Whose Authority?"

## 1 Corinthians 4:1-21

### The Apostle Paul

- Paul, a Steward (vs 1-2)
  - Steward – one who had been given special responsibilities to oversee on behalf of the master, entrusted to act on behalf of the master.
- Paul, the Subject of Evaluation (vs 3-5)
  - Premature Evaluations
  - "Know it All" Evaluations
  - Self-Evaluation
  - The Lord's Evaluation
    - God alone will bring light to the things hidden in darkness.
    - God knows the motives of the heart.
  - Unless the evaluation is made in the light of God's authority it will fall short of truth.
- Paul questions the Corinthian Church (vs 6-7)
  - Who regards you as superior?
  - 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 Corinthian Church

- The testimony of the church was failing. (vs 8-13)
  - They were satisfied with their maturity, success, effectiveness, commitment and progress.

### Paul and the Corinthian Church

- Paul's rebuke of the pride of the Corinthian Church, a church that thought more of itself than it should have.

- Paul's purpose was to admonish them as beloved children. (vs 14)
  - Admonish – to impress something on the mind.
- Paul was their spiritual father. (vs 15-17)
  - Paul brought the gospel to them, creating a special relationship.
  - Paul served as an example to the Church in Corinth.
  - Paul was willing to discipline the Corinthians.

### Paul's Authority

- Authority – the right to give instructions; the right to make decisions; the right to bring about obedience.
- Authoritarianism – enforcement of strict obedience at the expense of personal freedom.
- Paul's approach to authority (vs 18-21)

*<sup>7</sup>But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. <sup>8</sup>So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.*

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

- Paul's approach to authority was one of a father, one who longs to see his child succeed and grow.
  - Authority that balances truth and grace
  - Authority that utilizes discipline not to penalize but to correct
  - Authority that brings boldness and humility
  - Authority that brings courage and compassion
  - Authority that brings strength and meekness

### Paul's Instructions

- Remove the pride.
- End the competition.
- Disregard the judgments born of human evaluations.
- Submit to the authority of God's grace in your life.

