

Know the Word (1 Cor 4-6)

A 1 Corinthians 4:1-4:2

1 Cor. 4:1-5 – “So then, men ought to regard us as **servants** of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians chapter four that a Christian has two primary roles.

“Let a man so consider us, as **servants** of Christ and **stewards** of the mysteries of God.”
1 Corinthians 4:1 (NKJV)

Paul tells us in this passage of scripture that we are both servants and stewards. We are:

1. SERVANTS of Christ
2. STEWARDS of the mysteries of God

The word translated “servant” was originally designated an underclass of seaman—one who was responsible to a higher-ranking officer. He was a rower in a boat. He has a boss over him who would tell him when to row.

In several translations, the phrase “those who have been given a trust” is simply translated as “steward”. A steward was someone placed in charge of the master’s household or business to run the operation while the master is gone away.

In both of these roles God expects us to be faithful. Look at verse two:

“Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2 (NKJV)

Paul is saying that because of our service to Christ, others will see Christ in us and will thus see what God is like.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY.

All of us as Christians are going to be held accountable. Who will you and I be accountable to? Our text tells us, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ.” We are going to be accountable to God.

The Bible tells us that all people in the world will be accountable to Him:

"As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." Romans 14:11 (NKJV)

God is the creator and master of the universe. The Bible says that at the last judgment God is going to ask us two questions. He will ask us first – what did you do with His son Jesus? Then He will ask us – what did you do with what I gave you? The first question is about relationship. How good of a servant were you? The second question is about the things He put you in charge of: your time, talents, possession, and information. How good of a steward were you? You and I are going to be accountable to Him in both of those areas. He is going to see if we were faithful.

Parable of the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25)

A faithful Servant and a faithful Steward begins with accountability.

Parable of the three servants (Matthew 25) The master returns and calls for a day of accountability. "What have you done with what I gave you?" He asks. The Master questions each one of the servants – to see what they did with what they were given – that is accountability.

2. PREPAREDNESS.

If we are faithful we are to always be prepared.

Parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25) :The parable says that those who were prepared were invited into the wedding and the door was shut behind them. The five who had gone to buy more oil came back and found the door closed and they said, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Matthew 25:11-12 (NKJV)

Jesus tells his listeners that they should always be prepared – for no one knows the time when He will return. We are always to be faithful. We are always to be prepared.

3. COMMITMENT.

Jesus said it this way: "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:62 (HCSB)

He also said: "He who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." Matthew 10:38 (NKJV)

Paul did not have an easy life as a Christian – but one thing he did have was commitment. The Bible tells us how Paul suffered as a Christian: "Five times he was whipped. Three times he was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times he was shipwrecked. He spent a night and a day in the sea. He faced dangers many times – more than many of us will ever face. But he always stayed committed to Jesus – he remained faithful. You see:

B. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5:13

v1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.

v2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

The whole chapter is summed up in these two verses – there are three main points Paul makes:

1. The Story. "actually reported" is an unusual phrase for Paul – but it essentially means: "People are saying ..." What was happening was so widespread it had reached to Paul.
2. The Sin.
3. The Response. There appeared to be an acceptance of the sin, even pride in tolerating the sin. Far from tolerating it, the people should have dealt with the sin, and not fellowshiped with this guy until he repented.

v6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

Yeast, or leaven in dough, is the analogy Paul uses to describe the effects of sin on a body. Yeast adds carbon dioxide uniformly to a lump of dough by a process of digestion – or putrefaction. The yeast digests the sugar then expels CO₂. You put just a little yeast into the dough, and let it sit. That yeast will fill the whole dough with that Carbon Dioxide, and then you bake it and its bread.

Sin, if not dealt with – does the same thing.

v7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast-as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

This picture would have been very clear to the Jews in the Corinthian church. In Exodus chapter 12 the Lord told the Israelis – still in Egypt – to go through their houses and get rid of all yeast, then make unleavened, or flat bread.

The analogy is of sin, and the world.

- ✓ While in the world yeast, or sin, is the natural way of things.
- ✓ But God came to bring us out of the world, and remove the sin, or yeast, from us
- ✓ Passover – OT and NT

v8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

- The Israelis celebrated a Festival for God's deliverance – in a sense that what we do every time we gather together – we celebrate our deliverance from sin.
- These people celebrated that Festival with malice and wickedness – malice referring to the divisions and backbiting going on – wickedness referring to their tolerance of open, unrepentant sin.

**v9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-
v10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy
and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11
But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls
himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a
drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.**

But if one of your brothers is openly sinning – opening rebelling against he revealed will of God in His word – then our actions should be different. This person should know better – we should avoid them.

Romans 12:1 "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

C 1 Corinthians 6:12 – 20 (NIV)

“Everything is permissible for me” – but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me” – but I will not be mastered by anything. “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food” – but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Discussion Questions

Question 1 - Apparently the Corinthian congregation boasted to Paul that as Christian believers they had a right to do anything they pleased. What’s wrong with saying that?

Question 2 - In Verse 13, some Corinthians claimed that the physical acts of eating and digesting food have no bearing on one’s inner spiritual life, therefore the physical act of promiscuous sexual activity also does not affect one’s spiritual life. What’s wrong with this reasoning? (Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:4)