

1 Corinthians Study 5

Read 1 Corinthians 3:18-4:21

KEY VERSES—

“Therefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. And you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s”(3:21-23)

SUMMARY—

Having shown the sin and carnality of elevating and dividing over men, and having established the power and wisdom of God versus the arrogance and folly of man, he moves on to show the real source of wisdom—to be considered “fools for Christ’s sake” (4:10). These brethren were self-deceived if they continued in their pursuit of man’s wisdom (3:18; cf. Galatians 6:3; James 3:13-18). Having received so many greater things, they should not glory in men (3:18-23). The goal of service and stewardship should not be praise and honor for ourselves but faithfulness to our Master (4:1-5). If the apostles themselves had nothing of their own in which to glory, then why should these other teachers be honored (4:6-7)? He then contrasts the kind of praise and glory these teachers and brethren want with the mistreatment that the apostles actually receive (4:8-13). Then Paul issues a challenge to these brethren and teachers (4:14-21).

QUESTIONS—

- 1) Had the Corinthians continued glorying in men, what direction would they have taken (3:18-21)? In accepting the wisdom of men (3:18b), what would they actually have been doing (3:18a)?
- 2) How will people consider us when we choose to be guided by the wisdom of God (3:18; cf. 1:25-28; 4:10)?
- 3) What do the two quotations from the Old Testament in Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11 establish (3:19)?

4) Why is it folly to glory in men (3:21; cf. 1:29,31)? Why did they not even need to glory in men—what had God given them (3:21b-22)?

5) What is the point of mentioning that the Christian has all of these things (3:21-22)? In what sense is it that everything God has made, He has made for man (cf. Romans 8:32; Matthew 5:5; John 10:10)?

6) Rather than these teachers, who was the rightful owner of these Corinthians (3:23; cf. 3:16-17; 6:19-20)?

7) What are two purposes for teachers in God's plan (4:1; cf. 3:5,9a)? Does there appear to be much difference in the apostle's view of teachers and the Corinthians' view of teachers?

8) What is a "steward" (4:1-2)? What is the nature of his work? How does the Master need for him to perform?

9) Who is unable to judge the faithfulness of God's servant—name three (4:3)? Who is to judge then (4:4b-5)? 1 Corinthians 16 Lessons by Rob Harbison

10) Why is no man qualified to judge himself (4:3b; Psalm 19:12-13; 1 John 3:20-21)? Why is the Lord qualified to judge (4:5; cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 8:16)?

11) Where does man's commendation and praise need to come from (4:5b)? What benefit is it if it comes from himself (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:12,18)?

12) What lesson is Paul teaching the Corinthians by applying these principles to himself and Apollos (4:6)? Based on what could they even glory in men—anything (4:7)? How had each of them acquired their standing before God?

13) Paul contrasts the Corinthians and the apostles of Christ in the next few verses (4:8-13). What kind of tone do you detect in his words? Does he use that tone to make fun, humiliate, or for some higher purpose?

14) How does Paul depict the Corinthians (4:8)? What constituted their fullness and wealth? Why did Paul wish that they really were reigning (4:8-9)?

15) How did the apostles appear to the rest of the world (4:9-13)?

⇒ 4:9c—

⇒ 4:10a—

⇒ 4:10b—

⇒ 4:13b—

⇒ 4:13b—

16) How does Paul contrast the apostles with the Corinthians (4:10)? In what sense? Was this conclusion correct?

17) Describe the suffering of the apostles (4:11-13a; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-33). Why were such messengers of God treated this way (cf. John 15:18-21; 17:14-19)? Were other teachers in Corinth boasting in such things (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:16-22,30; 12:9-10)? Who were they obviously preaching then—Christ or themselves (2 Corinthians 4:5,8-12)?

18) In responding to these evil things with good (4:12b-13a), what do the apostles show that the other teachers are not showing (3:3; 4:18; cf. 2 Corinthians 10:12-18)?

19) Why did Paul write these sarcastic things to them (4:14)? Did he mean for his tone to sound caustic (4:14-16)? Or did he want them to understand how serious this was (4:21)?

20) What was Paul's relationship to these brethren (4:15; cf. 3:10)? How does this explain his tremendous concern for them (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:1-3)? 1 Corinthians 17 Lessons by Rob Harbison

21) Is Paul encouraging them to do the very thing he had criticized them for doing (4:16)? In what sense then (cf. 11:1)?

22) Why were Paul's enemies bold to speak against him (4:18)? What would happen—to their surprise (4:19)? What would Paul find out about them then (4:19-20)? What should the Corinthians anticipate with Paul's return (4:21)?