

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

1 CORINTHIANS: LESSON FOUR: Chapter 4: 1 - 21

Bible source: NKJV. Primary expositor resource: David Guzik, Bible Expositor

Secondary resources: William Barclay, Warren W. Wiersbe, F. F. Bruce, Irving L. Jensen, Chuck Smith

http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_author.cfm?AuthorID=2

Regarding Verses 1 – 21...

1. List the main point(s) of this chapter.

1. **Misguided worldly understanding of Paul's ministry by the Corinthian believers.**
2. **Apostolic Humility and Trials**
3. **Fatherly Caring**

2. What verse(s) do you see as key to this chapter?

Verse 20

Regarding Verses 1 – 5 ... The Corinthians view of Paul and the apostles.

3. What two terms is Paul using to describe himself and the other preachers of the Gospel?

Servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

4. Describe the difference between a servant and steward.

Servant:

“There are several different words in the language of the New Testament to describe a servant. Here, Paul uses the word hyperetas, which describes a subordinate servant functioning as a free man (an “under-rower”). He does not use the more common New Testament word for a servant (doulos) which designated a common slave.” (Guzik)

Morgan describes this “under-rower” as “one who acts under direction, and asks no questions, one who does the thing he is appointed to do without hesitation, and one who reports only to the One Who is over him.”

Steward:

In addition to a servant, Paul asks to be considered as a steward, who was the manager of a household.

In relation to the master of the house, the steward was a slave, but in relation to the other slaves, the steward was a master.

“The steward . . . was the master's deputy in regulating the concerns of the family, providing food for the household, seeing it served out at proper times and seasons, and in proper quantities. He received all the cash, expended what was necessary for the support

of the family, and kept exact accounts, for which he was obliged at certain times to lay before the master.” (Clarke)

5. What else does Paul say is required of a steward?

That he be faithful.

For stewards, the important thing was faithfulness. They had to be efficient managers of the master’s resources. A steward never owned the property or resource he dealt with; he simply managed them for his master and had to manage them faithfully. (Guzik)

6. The believers in Corinth had a low regard for the apostolic authority of Paul (and the other apostles). What is Paul’s response to their opinions?

Paul and others only valued the judgment of Jesus.

Judge nothing before the time: It is as if Paul were saying, “You Corinthians act like judges at athletic events, qualified to give some the trophy and to send others away as losers. But Jesus is the only judge, and you are judging before the events are over.”

Regarding Verses 6 – 13 ... A sarcastic rebuke of Corinthian pride.

7. Pride is a theme that runs through much of Paul’s writings. Verses 4:6-7 are the second time in this book Paul mentions pride (also in 1:26-31). How would you sum up how a Christian should view pride? (Proverbs 11:2, John 13:14-17)

Proverbs 11:2. When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.

John 13:14-17. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

8. It is important to understand Verses 8 and 10 in the way Paul intended. These are ironic and sarcastic statements (ironic means happening in the opposite way to what is expected). Why does he do this?

First let’s read the verses with the sense of irony and sarcasm. [Leader: re-read the verses.]

Paul uses irony and sarcasm here to get the Corinthians to see how poor they really are because of their haughtiness and spiritual immaturity in comparison with the apostles. In Verse 9, he pictures the apostles being brought into a gladiatorial contest in an arena at the end of the procession as all the world and even the angles look on. The apostles are brought in last for the fight to the death.

Then in verse 10, he goes back to sarcasm to effectively say, the apostles are the heroes here and you should want to be like them, but instead, you think you’re better than they are. You’re the real fools, not the apostles.

9. In verses 11 to 13, Paul gives a graphic description of his three years in Ephesus from his arrival there right up to the writing of this letter to the Corinthians. In contrast to the self-centered, power-oriented message that some Corinthians believed and followed, what does Paul’s life exemplify?

Humility, persecution, perseverance, etc.

10. If all people were in a line between Corinthians (proudful, self-centered, power-oriented) on one end and Paul (humble, persecuted, slandered, scum of the earth) on the other end, where would you be? Would you like to be in a different place than you actually are? Is it easier to be like Paul or the Corinthians?

Regarding Verses 14 – 21...

11. After writing so harshly in the first 3½ chapters, why is Paul now sounding so gentle (“I don’t want to embarrass you” and “my own dear children”)?

According to Matthew Henry, In reproofing for sin, we should distinguish between sinners and their sins. Reproofs that kindly and affectionately warn are likely to reform. Though Paul spoke with authority as a parent, he would rather beseech them in love.

12. Paul had now become more like a ‘father’ to them. What can we learn from this approach?

Don’t minimize or overlook core problems. But don’t keep bashing people over the head with them either. Remember, the Corinthians had written to Paul with several questions and he hasn’t even mentioned them yet. In the first 3½ chapters, he has pointed out in a very direct way the basic problems these people have with the Christian message, with the Christian ministry and ministers, and with themselves. He’s not downplaying these issues at all. But now he’s saying, “I don’t want to make you feel bad. I want to help you. But before we can get on to the things that are bothering you, you’ve got to face up to these basic issues.”

13. In 4:16, Paul says, “I want you to be like me.” By saying this, what is he looking for?

As he says in the opening verses of Chapter 4, he is looking for Christians to be servants of Christ, to recognize that they have been given a trust, and to be faithful with it. He wants Christians to be humble, to endure persecution, and to be “fools for Christ.” He wants Christians to set an example as they follow Christ in both faith and deeds.

14. Why did Paul choose Timothy to go to Corinth? (v17)

Timothy seemed to be Paul’s chief “trouble shooter,” often being sent to problem churches.

Paul was sending Timothy to reestablish them in the truth that Paul had taught to them, the things that Paul taught in every church everywhere. (Guzik)

Timothy, Paul said in another epistle, was the only one that he had that was like-minded as was he. (Smith)

15. What choices did Paul give them as to how he might come to them on a return visit? (21)

With a rod to correct, or coming in the spirit of love and of meekness?”

There is no doubt Paul would prefer to come in gentleness, but he'll leave that decision up to the Corinthians! "How do you desire that I come?"

TRUE OR FALSE QUESTIONS

- 1__**F**__ In the days of Paul, servants had as much responsibility as stewards.
- 2__**F**__ Paul was concerned what the Corinthians thought of him, after all, he was their spiritual leader.
- 3__**T**__ "Do not go beyond what is written" in verse 6 means, "we should take our every cue from Scripture."
- 4__**T**__ The pride exhibited by the Corinthians was a stumbling block to their recognition as to how blessed (rich) they actually were.
- 5__**T**__ Paul's response to verbal and physical abuse and slander was to "turn the other cheek."
- 6__**F**__ The Corinthian believers were eager to imitate Paul. (v16)
- 7__**T**__ Timothy was Paul's son.
- 8__**F**__ Paul was actually getting frustrated with the believers in Corinth and wanted to revisit them to discipline them.

DIGGING DEEPER

Regarding verse 8, how would Paul respond to the idea, popular today, that "God wants you to be happy, rich, and successful"?

Regarding verse 21, If Paul came to visit us here today, would he come with a whip, in love, or with a gentle spirit? Why? How would you like him to come?