

## **1 Corinthians 4 New American Standard Bible**

This is the way *any* person is to regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup> In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. <sup>3</sup> But to me it is an insignificant matter that I would be examined by you, or by *any* human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. <sup>4</sup> For I am not aware of anything against myself; however I am not vindicated by this, but the one who examines me is the Lord. <sup>5</sup> Therefore do not go on passing judgment before *the* time, *but wait* until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of *human* hearts; and then praise will come to each person from God.

<sup>6</sup> Now these things, brothers *and sisters*, I have figuratively applied to myself and Apollos on your account, so that in us you may learn not to exceed what is written, so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other. <sup>7</sup> For who considers you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

<sup>8</sup> You are already filled, you have already become rich, you have become kings without us; and indeed, *I wish that you had become kings so that we also might reign with you!* <sup>9</sup> For I think, God has exhibited us, the apostles, last of all as men condemned to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to mankind. <sup>10</sup> We are fools on account of Christ, but you are prudent in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are without honor! <sup>11</sup> Up to this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed and roughly treated and homeless; <sup>12</sup> and we labor, working with our own hands; when we are verbally abused, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure *it*; <sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we reply as friends; we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, *even until now*.

<sup>14</sup> I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. <sup>15</sup> For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet *you would not have* many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. <sup>16</sup> Therefore I urge you, be imitators of me. <sup>17</sup> For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways which are in

Christ, just as I teach everywhere in every church. <sup>18</sup> Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. <sup>19</sup> But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I shall find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power. <sup>20</sup> For the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power. <sup>21</sup> What do you desire? That I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

### **We will use five tools on our expedition that are built around five questions**

1. What questions were provoked within you?
2. Did anything confuse you?
3. Did anything move you emotionally?
4. Did God instruct you to do something?
5. Did you gain any insight into God's character?

### **Pauls observations and insights**

1. Paul presents his defence, regards the allegations about his leadership, with irony and sarcasm.
2. Consent to wrong doing is not God's way. Silence at times can give the impression of being a statement of acceptance of the wrong doing.
3. To be a servant of Christ is to take up the role of an ambassador.
4. The mystery of God is the truth that has been veiled behind the curtain, now revealed and explained.
5. A God can only invest in those who can be trusted with the responsibility of the truth. You wouldn't give permission for your child to drive your car.
6. We should never be intimidated by anyone, lest of all someone who can't be trusted to make a reasonable judgement without having prejudice.
7. To not examine yourself, is to not go on a journey of self-judgement, as it will only lead to self-condemnation.
8. Paul is saying 'even so' that doesn't mean I haven't done wrong, but I am not going to give my enemy the privilege of making me think about myself the way my enemy thinks about me.
9. I will trust all I do to the Lord, who I know will judge in mercy and in righteousness.
10. Don't be of the camp of those who make their judgements about people prematurely.
11. God evaluates with all the facts and mitigating circumstances when He judges.
12. I live according to these principles so I don't get distracted and lose sight of my call to serve the Lord.
13. Paul warns of the dangers of reading into his letters stuff that is just not there! Don't read the scriptures out of context.

14. Can we all agree arrogance is not good, so then it is not of God, which means don't be arrogant if you want to represent God.
15. Why are you, says Paul, self-elevating? Do you think it will add value to who you really are? You can't be more than you are, so enjoy yourself with all your limitations.
16. Paul addresses the arrogance and self-elevation with the truth, as to where the truth they proclaimed came from.
17. The role of a leader is that of a shepherd, willing to lay down and elevate others, even as Jesus did.
18. How active are angels today in your life?
19. Are you willing to look foolish for Jesus Christ?
20. The role of an apostle had a price to pay.
21. Leaders are targets for everyone, friends and enemies, and if he is to uphold his reputation, then he must respond to everyone with love.
22. Paul wants this church to see the damage they are doing when they operate out of wrong doing.
23. Who is your spiritual father in Christ?
24. Paul reminds them that as the first messenger of the gospel, he became their spiritual father. We all need someone to go to for help.
25. How confident are you to invite people, as Paul did, to imitate you and the way you are living your life.
26. Timothy's faithfulness to the truth of the gospel, was as if it was Paul himself going to this church, because he and Timothy were of one heart.
27. Where does the spirit of arrogance come from?
28. God's kingdom empowers us to overcome enemies. Has that been true for you?
29. What does it mean for Paul to come to them with a rod, or with love?
30. Do you have a spirit of gentleness?