

The Workers of Pride (1 Cor 4)

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Introduction: Paul has been trying to show the Corinthians the difference between spirituality and worldliness.

- A. The church was divided over “favorite” preachers. **(1:10-13)**
 - a. In this case it was not due to things the preachers encouraged.
 - b. Rather there were individuals who wished to use the love others had for these men to their own purposes.
 - c. Satan commonly will use good things to his purposes. **(2 Cor 11:12-15)**
- B. The motive of those who tried to exalt themselves as leaders by deceit was pride.
 - a. Pride is an overvaluation of ones abilities. **(Gal 6:3)**
 - b. Pride seeks the attention of men. Others who are perceived as in “competition” are viewed as adversaries.
 - c. It is in this atmosphere that false accusations and bitter attacks can come.
- C. On the other hand, what is the motive of those who serve the Lord? **(Phil 1:15-17)**
 - a. Pride can be the motivation of much “personal work”.
 - b. Ex. Preachers action overseas vs. home. Actions after a church spilt.

I. What is the Heart of God’s Worker?

- A. The apostles were men whom God had **entrusted with His word. (4:1-2)**
 - 1. They were men under **God’s authority.**
 - a. As “**servants**” they were to follow orders.
 - b. As “**stewards**” they were entrusted with great riches. **(2 Cor 12:7)**
 - c. In these terms there is no room for a leader over their own party! God comes first. Look at Paul’s attitude verse those who would later form their own parties. **(Acts 20:27, 30)**
 - d. We also are to take care concerning our teaching. **(2 Tim 2:2; 1 Tim 4:16)**
 - 2. They looked to **God as their judge. (4:3-5)**
 - a. Some have suggested that the word for judge in verses 3-4 deal with a gathering of evidence in order to render a final judgment.
 - b. Who determines the standard of judgment?
 - 1. Not the Corinthians or any man. **(Gal 1:10)**
 - 2. Not Paul, even with a good conscience. **(1 John 3:19-22)**
 - 3. God will uncover all and judge with perfection! **(4:5)**
 - 4. Let us seek God’s praise.
- B. The workers of pride have a different heart.
 - 1. They use God’s word to a different end. They will change it when it suits them. **(2 Cor 4:1-2)**
 - a. They may have good knowledge of God’s word and the ability to teach.
 - b. What is their goal? You can tell by what motivates them!
 - 2. They are very much involved with **unrighteous judgment. (Matt 7:1-4)**
 - a. Their goal is to be the best. Competitors must be destroyed.

- b. Those who seek to build a party will praise or attack you on the basis of your submitting to their will, not God's.
- c. Some begin looking for material to be used against another in the future.

II. How does God's Worker measure against the worker of Pride? (4:6-7)

- A. Paul sought to protect and build up Christians. **(4:6)**
 - 1. Paul did not name those party leaders yet. He wanted their repentance.
 - 2. These "leaders" approach will lead to strife.
- B. Paul knew that any ability he had came from God. **(4:7)**
 - 1. Here there is no room for boasting. **(Gal 6:14)**
 - 2. These "leaders" sought attention to themselves by the gifts of God.
- C. Paul had a clear view of who he is before God. **(4:8-13)**
 - 1. These leaders thought they were rich and full. **(Rev 3:14-19)**
 - 2. Contrast this with what a worker for God will endure.
 - 3. The world will praise these "leaders" and despise the other. Who does God praise? **(2 Cor 10:12, 17-18)**
 - 4. We need to be careful in how we recommend preachers. When we give emphasis to one's speaking ability are we appealing to the world or to God?
 - a. When we think of ourselves as "thinking" and others as "traditional" we may be walking in the pathway of pride.
 - b. Because pride is essentially competitive then the one who possesses pride is often first to see it in another. They will be quick to judge another.

III. God's Workers will Influence Others for Eternity

- A. Paul genuinely cared for them. **(4:14-17)**
 - 1. He shamed them in order to warn! He was not just trying to hurt them.
 - 2. He considered his love like that of a father.
 - 3. He sent Timothy to them to build them up in God's word.
- B. Paul was willing to confront and defeat those who would not repent. **(4:18-21)**
 - 1. He would never seek peace at any price. There is a time to stand.
 - 2. Why were the brethren becoming "puffed-up" against one another? They had learned it from these proud men. **(4:6, 18)**
 - 3. Paul was willing to give these men time. If they would not repent then they had to be dealt with. In the next chapter we will learn more about the attitudes that spring from pride. **(1 Cor 5:2)**
- C. The workers of pride will run over people that get in their way. **(3 Jn 9-10)**
 - 1. Their first goal is to take out the leadership.
 - 2. Why then do you suppose they concentrated their efforts in attacking Paul?

Conclusion: What kind of worker are you?

- A. When we know who God is and who we are then we can be used by the Lord to accomplish His work. **(1 Cor 4:7)**
- B. How do you view yourself and your brethren? Are you a steward or a ruler? **(Mt 20:25-28)**