

A Matter of Power

1 Corinthians 4

*“The arrogant backsliders talked a lot about their freedom and independence and rights, much as do many professing believers today who buy the world’s philosophy and like to ape its ways. They no doubt thought they had good arguments for Paul in the event he showed up. But he would be checking their spiritual power, not their words, the inside not the outside. God’s people should reflect God’s **Kingdom**, His rule and glory, which **does not consist in words, but in power**. This is a central principle of great importance. Faith that does not result in right living may have many words to support it, but it will have no power. A person’s true spiritual character is not determined by the impressiveness of his words but by the power of his life (cf. Matt. 7:21-23).*

- I. The problem in Corinth was that there was only one church in the city, and Paul was not about to let it be led by arrogant, clueless, self-serving people who lost sight of what the gospel had done for them. There are many churches that choose to be led by the self-serving philosophy of this evil world system, and what we learn from this letter is that we had better make sure that we do not become one of them. Jesus wants our motives to be centered on serving him alone, in the power of the Spirit, as good stewards of the gospel

1 Cor. 4:1-5

Col. 3:16

ὑπηρέτης hypēretēs, under rower, one who serves alongside others.

οἰκονόμος οικονόμος, the manager of household or of household affairs, overseer.

“The word hyperetas literally means an “under-rower,” in the sense that someone is a rower on a big galley ship. So, though it is not the most lowly word for a servant, it certainly not a prestigious position. Under-rowers serve ‘Christ the master-pilot, helping forward the ship of the Church toward the haven of heaven.’” (Trapp)

2 Corinthians 11:12-15 *12And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. 13For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 15It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*

- II. All things must pass through the lens of Scripture. Scripture humbles us, makes us think, challenges us, motivates us toward holiness, doesn't let us get away with anything, points out our sin, reinforces the hope and joy of our salvation, and most importantly, keeps us from the sin of pride, conceit and arrogance.

1 Cor. 4:6-13

Rev. 3:17-18

"Grace leads to gratitude; 'wisdom' and self-sufficiency lead to boasting and judging. Grace has a leveling effect; self-esteem has a self-exalting effect. Grace means humility; boasting means that one has arrived." Fee

- III. The reign of God in the church does not depend *in human eloquence, excellence of speech, or even in doctrines; but in power, εν δυναμει, in the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit; enlightening, quickening, converting, and sanctifying believers;...*" (Clarke). We will never truly experience God's power, until we humbly submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over every aspect of our blood bought, sanctified lives.

1 Cor. 4:14-16