

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for all references. Verses may be made bold or numbered for emphasis.

Topic: Application of I Corinthians 4

Respecting God's Role as Judge

Romans 12:19-21 instructs us about God's authority as it relates to revenge: *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."*

This verse teaches us to 'give place' to our anger concerning the world's injustices. God has a specific day appointed to perfectly judge all unfairness/unrighteousness/un-godliness. Trusting this, we can let go of retaliating or condemning others to 'overcome evil with good.' For example, when someone hurts us, we're free to love them, not harboring anger or bitterness, which motivates revenge.

Regarding delegated authority, *Romans 13:1* says: *"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."* We can relax, knowing God has set up a temporary system to maintain order and punish evil on earth. i.e. authority in government, Church, and family. We know man doesn't execute this power perfectly, but God will one day!

In God's time, unbelievers will be righteously dealt with at the Great White Throne Judgment. Their works will also be punished: *"But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."* (*Rom. 2:2*) At this judgment 'the dead,' that is, individuals who have not trusted Christ's blood, will stand before God: *"And I saw **the dead**, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and **the dead** were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."* (*Rev. 20:12*)

In contrast, we can be confident that the Judgment Seat of Christ deals with our labor (*I Thess. 4:6*) completely in the Body of Christ, but also rewards for 'the living' (saints). *"For every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."* (*I Cor. 3:13*) God has a perfect plan...we can rest and trust Him.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

Let us further examine the believers judgment. There is no punishment involved as saints have had all their sin dealt with by Christ's shed blood. (*Rom. 5:9*) Notice what Scripture says:

We will receive praise:

*"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have **praise of God.**"* (*I Cor. 4:5*)

Our work determines 'rewards' or 'loss:' ***I Corinthians 3:14-15:*** *"If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive **a reward**. If any man's work shall be **burned**, he shall suffer **loss**: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."*

We are heirs, looking forward to 'glory:' ***-Rom. 8:17-18:*** *"And if children, then **heirs**; heirs of God, and **joint-heirs** with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also **glorified together**. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory** which shall be revealed in us." As we suffer, there is glory.*

Paul also references the term, 'crown:' ***-II Timothy 4:8:*** *"Henceforth there is laid up for me **a crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, **but unto all them also that love his appearing.**" As Paul is ready to depart this world he relays that he has made full proof of his ministry, fighting the good fight, finishing his course, and keeping the faith (*I Tim.4:5-7*), resulting in a crown.*

To Do: Search for clues in the context of the verses above. Notice that the choices we make and the sort of work we build in our life determines the reward, praise, glory, and crown of righteousness to be received now and in eternity (*I Tim. 4:8*). As we yield to allow Christ's life to live in us (walk of faith), we please our Father. All else simply burns away. What a day that will be, indeed!



Search it out!

Choose Something to Study in This Section

I Corinthians 4: Asking Questions As You Read

Examine verses! 

When a passage is difficult to understand a student can slow down to ask himself questions to gain insight. This tool is found on P. 15 of "Exploring the Bible Using Study Skills;" available on Amazon or download from our website.

Asking questions: As you progress through a passage or chapter, make time to think, meditate, and pray about what it is teaching. Use the 'Who, what, when, where, why, and how approach' in analyzing the verse: "To whom is it referring?" "What is the topic in this section?" "Why is that being said here?" Additionally, don't forget to look at the passage from a practical application point of view: "How does it relate to me?"

***Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on using many new study insights.**

Two Examples:

1. Read Verses 1-3: a) Question to understand this section: Why was Paul acknowledging his roles as a minister and steward? (This is teaching that his roles are God-given; to be respected.) **b)** How does, "...it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you...", relate to his roles? (They harshly judged the Apostle, not respecting his authority/roles.) **Application:** Could I be disrespecting God's authority and if so, what ought to be changed?

2. Read Verses 4-5: a) When is the specific time for the Lord to judge? (When the Lord comes-Vs 5) **b)** What will be done at this judgment? (The light of God's Word will manifest all hidden things and councils of the heart, and each saint will have praise-Vs 5)

Application: Can I objectively judge Paul/others/self?

How To Reign Together

While infrequently used, 'reign' is a good Bible term that needs some thought. Positionally, we see grace reigning today (dominate/rule), because of Christ's righteousness. *"For if by one man's (Adam) offence death **reigned** by one; much more they (saints) which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness **shall reign** in life by one, Jesus Christ."* (Vs. 17) In addition, as we yield to allow Christ to live in and through us, grace has opportunity to also functionally reign in our life, through His righteousness working in us. *"That as sin hath **reigned** unto death (unbelievers), even so **might** grace **reign** through righteousness unto eternal life (saints) by Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Vs. 21) The term 'might' is used as grace reigning is dependent upon our free will to yield, making wise decisions.

Romans 6:12 specifically teaches us we have choices: *"Let not sin therefore **reign** in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."* Sin reigns in our life when we obey sin in our members, exalting our flesh, rather than yield unto God: *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."* (Rom. 6:13) This is what I Corinthians 4:8 is based upon and refers to. Paul desires that the Corinthians would allow grace to reign, so they could reign together as members of Christ's own Body, rather than reign as kings in carnality, exalting the wisdom and power of this world (Satan): *"Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have **reigned** as kings without us: and I would to God ye did **reign**, that we also might **reign** with you."* (I Corinthians 4:8)

So how can we reign together with Christ? We need to yield to the sound doctrine found in *Romans* through *Philemon* to live it in the details of our lives. As this is done, Christ the Word is exalted. One day we will rule and reign with Him in heavenly places. Grace also can reign now in the details of our life, affecting many things i.e. others who observe Christ in us (*I Cor. 9:22*), and, as the angels observe they are impacted (*Eph. 3:10*). To summarize, in order to allow grace to reign, we purpose to yield and do a few things: read the Word, believe it, and determine to do whatever God is teaching us to 'do.' Wisdom in our inner man is used to enable us to learn and make wise decisions as we live Christ.

1 Corinthians 4: Judging Church Leaders

By Sue Ann Ambrosio Fitzpatrick

Paul begins *Chapter 4* in defense of his apostleship. *Chapter 1* told us that the Corinthians were taking sides and dividing up against one another behind different church leaders, (*1 Cor. 1:12*), some were for Apollos, some for Peter, some for Paul. At the end of *Chapter 3* we see Paul trying to unify them, (*1 Cor. 3:23*) “*And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.*”

And then in *Chapter 4* he defends himself. Paul begins by telling them he didn’t give much credence to others judging him (*Verse 3*). He was responsible only to God (*Verse 4*), not the Corinthians, unbelievers, or even himself. He answers only to God, and is judged only by God.

In *Verses 14-15* Paul lovingly as a father to a son warns them they are on the wrong path, he is their spiritual father. And then he beseeches them to follow him. *Verse 15*: “...yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel...”, *Verse 16*: “...be ye followers of me...”, and *1 Cor. 11:1*: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” As Israel followed Moses, we are to follow Paul, Paul’s doctrine, humility, and how he follows Christ, the risen Christ not the earthly Christ.

Do you have a favorite preacher or pastor that you esteem higher than others? That is what the Corinthians were doing with Paul and church leaders. They said Paul is not a good speaker (*1 Cor. 2:4*) he is weak and foolish. Do we judge our pastors and teachers by earthly standards? By worldly wisdom? Are we qualified to judge who is best?

I beseech you, don’t judge the pastors and teachers and church leaders, they answer only to God. God is their judge. Only God knows the heart and motivation of man. Don’t become prideful of following a certain pastor. Don’t place what a man says over Scripture. *Verse 6*: “...that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written...”



What Does Godly Labor Look Like?

1 Corinthians 4 gives us a glimpse of godly labor as Paul admonishes this carnal Church for being puffed up and exalting worldly wisdom/power. They were unable to discern spiritual things as they were carnal and walking as the unsaved, even falsely accusing Paul their Apostle: “*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.*” (*verse 3*)

Paul tried to teach them how to reign in grace, using himself and Apollos as humble examples: “*We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace. And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it...*” (*vs.10-12*)

In *Chapter 4*, Corinth saints were admonished to prefer others and serve, and not be high-minded, nor puffed up to exalt their flesh. What would this godly labor look like in our lives? Believers would be abased as they walked by faith and trusted the Truth they were taught. Further, they would glory in the Lord (*1 Cor. 1:31*) rather than in men: “*And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.*” (*verse 6*)

Godliness is god-like-ness; having the mind of Christ, thinking and behaving accordingly. All saints in the Body of Christ are to hold Paul as the minister of Christ, a faithful steward, their teacher, and the father of their faith (*verse 15*). If you desire godly labor, you would follow his grace doctrine as instructions to you: “*Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*” (*vs. 16*) Search this Truth out for yourself!

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Stamp

To:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 3:24)

What Does Being 'Puffed Up' Look Like?

Man has his way of doing things and the Corinthian believers were good examples of how this played out. Being puffed up is being arrogant, holding one’s own thinking above God’s. The Corinthian’s were taught the basics of the faith during the 1 1/2 years the Apostle Paul was with them. (Acts 18:11) Yet, they lived after the flesh, rather than applying these doctrines.

Had they practically lived what they knew, they would have matured from babes to make godly decisions by God’s grace: *“We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain...Giving no offence in any thing; that the ministry be not blamed.” (II Cor. 6:1,3)*

Instead, Paul had to remind them to live grace, and be holy: *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (II Cor. 6:17-18)*

In I Corinthians 4, in great love, Paul sends a faithful minister to remind them of the Truth of the gospel of the grace of God to encourage a change in thinking: *“For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.” (Vs 17)*

Think on this: Will we live godly, according to the Truth in us? If we do not purpose to do this, we will follow Satan and the course of this world: *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” (Rom. 1:21-22)* The bottom line is all saints need to decide for themselves who they will serve/exalt in their daily walk. Be ye thankful!

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