

# Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

## 1 Corinthians

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### Causes of division (1:18-4:5)

- 4:1... "us as ministers (servants) " of God, Greek is *hoop-ay-ret'-ace* meaning 'under-rower'
  - Who is the "us? Paul, Peter, and Apollos are Apostles and Evangelists (others?)
  - Rowers (using oars) = Apostles, Evangelists, (others?). The ship is the church, and Jesus is the Captain
  - The "under-rowers' are stewards of the mysteries of God"
    - A steward is someone who is trusted with the affairs of a master
    - "Secret things"...are things revealed by God through the ministry
- 4:2...the greatest responsibility for steward is faithfulness
- 4:3, 4...Paul is not concerned with Corinth's judgment of him, or even his own self-assessment; he cares only how the Lord will judge him
- 4:5...Paul warns the Corinthians about judging matters regarding the motives of the heart before the 'appointed time' when God will issue His praise when warranted
- 4:6, 7...the Corinthians (and all believers) should only follow what is taught ("don't go beyond what is written), and not follow teachers based on personality. Don't get conceited...everything you have was given to you
- 4:8-17...contrasting the Corinthian Christians with the church leaders/apostles
  - The Christians *received* everything, but the apostles had *given* everything
  - The Christians had become kings, but the apostles were despised
  - V.13...Apostles had become the "filth" of the world, Greek is *per-ee-kath'-ar-mah*. 'Katharma' was the refuse of a scapegoat; it was a practice of the Greeks to take a "worthless" prisoner and throw him into the sea in hopes of appeasing the gods
  - V.15...Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is the spiritual father and Apollos and other teachers are 'tutors'
- 4:8-17...contrasting the Corinthian Christians with the church leaders/apostles
  - V.15...Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is the spiritual father and Apollos and other teachers are 'tutors', Greek is *pahee-dag-o-gos'*. Roman and Greek tutors were responsible for supervising the life and morals of young men of upper-class families until they were young men.
  - V.16...Paul encourages them to "follow/imitate" him, Greek is *mim-ay-tace'* where we get our word 'mimic' (or copy). The word is in the present tense, so it literally means "keep on mimicking me" (note the progression)
- Pastors must be able teach God's word and live a life we can copy (4:1, 16)

### Immorality in the church (Chapter 5)

- 5:1...the sin was a man's fornication with "his father's wife" (we don't know if the father was alive)
  - The Greek city of Corinth was widely known as a sexually immoral city with several statues of Aphrodite (Greek) and Venus (Roman). The temple of Aphrodite was on the edge of Corinth; sex with the priestess was an act of worship.
  - This man's sin was even worse than the sexual sins of the unbelievers in Corinth; even the Greeks and Romans were opposed to incest
  - Commonly reported (widely known)
  - The Corinthians are proud that this man is in their church!
    - Shows tolerance and grace
    - Perhaps they explained it through twisted teaching
- 5:2...At the very least, they should have been ashamed for their church

- 5:3, 4...expulsion
  - Required for gross immoral acts (V.11-13), including sexual sin, greed, idol worship (things put above God), drunkards, extortionists, etc
  - Must involve Apostolic judgment/agreement (V.3-4). See also Acts 13:6-12 and Acts 5:1-11
  - Purpose of the expulsion is restoration (V.5). See also 2 Cor. 2:5-11
  - Expulsion keeps the church pure (v.6) (perhaps some in the church had argued that a little sin was actually good)
- 5:12-13...judgment belongs in the church