

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 4:1-7

**The requirement for stewards—4:1-2**

- 1) The command to obey—<sup>1</sup> *Let a person regard us in this way,*
  - a) Subordinates—*as servants [huperetes]* (assistants to a superior) *of Christ*
  - b) Responsible and accountable—*and stewards [oikonomos]* (household manager) *of the mysteries* (in the gospel) *of God.*
- 2) A performance review—<sup>2</sup> *In this case, moreover, it is required in stewards [oikonomos] that one be found faithful.*
  - a) Only the Owner who entrusted the steward with the responsibility can determine if he has been faithful. The opinion of the other servants is secondary at best.

**Paul relates to his conscience—4:3-5**

- 1) Reject incompetent hypercriticism—<sup>3</sup> *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be evaluated*
  - a) From others
    - i) *by you<sup>pl</sup>, or by any human court* (lit. “day”); (cf. 3:13; 4:5)
    - b) From self—*in fact, I do not even evaluate myself.* (too subjective)
- 2) Maintain a clear conscience—<sup>4</sup> *For I am conscious of nothing against myself,*
  - a) Your conscience is not perfect—*yet I am not acquitted in this;*
  - b) Rely on Christ’s evaluation—*but the one who evaluates me is the Lord.* (cf. 7:25)
- 3) Allow Christ to do His delegated job in the right time—<sup>5</sup> *Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes,* (cf. 5:12; 6:5)
  - a) The Son’s two-fold responsibility of exposure—*Who will both ...*
    - i) The exposure of the unseen—*bring to light the hidden things of darkness*
    - ii) The exposure of motives—*and reveal the thought processes of the hearts.*
  - b) The Father’s final evaluation of each individual—*And then each one’s praise* (based on approval) *will come from God.*

**Application to the Corinthians’ tendency toward a divisive attitude—4:6-7**

- 1) Paul seeks to make these truths more easily understood—<sup>6</sup> *Now these things, brothers, I have applied as a figure of speech* (farmers, builders, stewards) *to myself and Apollos for your<sup>pl</sup> sakes,*
  - a) Why?
    - i) The authority and sufficiency of Scripture—*so that you<sup>pl</sup> may be disciplined with respect to us not to think beyond what is written,*
    - ii) The danger of arrogantly choosing a Christian celebrity—*so that none of you<sup>pl</sup> may be puffed up in favor of the one* (leader) *against the other.*
      - (1) Greek culture despised humility as a sign of weakness.
- 2) A series of questions
  - a) Presumptuous—<sup>7</sup> *For who distinguishes you?* (God does!)
  - b) Ungrateful—*And what do you have that you did not receive?* (God provides it all)
    - i) *Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?*