

1st Corinthians 4:1-7

The requirement for stewards—4:1-2

- 1) The command to obey—¹ *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—² *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—³ *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be evaluated*
 - a) From others
 - i) *by you^{pl}, 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—⁴ *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—⁵ *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—⁶ *Now these things, brothers, I have applied as a figure of speech* (farmers, builders, stewards) *to myself and Apollos for your^{pl} sakes,*
 - a) Why?
 - i) The authority and sufficiency of Scripture—*so that you^{pl} 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^{pl} 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—⁷ *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?*