

1st Corinthians 4:14-21
Right thinking is not enough

One purpose of this letter to the Corinthians—4:14-17

- 1) Paul's fatherly purpose is clearly stated—4:14
 - a) Negatively—¹⁴ *I am not writing these things to cause you^{pl} shame,*
 - i) Not all shame is bad: 2nd Thessalonians 3:14; Titus 2:8
 - b) Positively—*but I am admonishing you^{pl} as my beloved children.* Cf. 3:1-2)
- 2) Paul's hyperbolic reason behind his admonition—4:15
 - a) *For though you^{pl} were to have ten thousand guardians in Christ, yet you^{pl} do not have many fathers;*
 - i) Why? *because I* (emphatic) *fathered you^{pl} in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*
 - b) The guardian may be the father's representative, but he can never take his place.
- 3) Paul's admonition restated—4:16-17
 - a) The command—¹⁶ *Therefore, I encourage you^{pl}, model yourselves after me.*
 - i) This would include 4:10-13; 11:1
 - b) The model of proper modeling—¹⁷ *For this reason I have sent Timothy to you^{pl},*
 - i) Who is Timothy? *who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord,*
 - (1) Of the nearly 50 uses of "in the Lord", it normally refers to the appropriate and required conduct of Christians.
 - ii) What is Timothy's delegated task?—*who will remind you^{pl} of my paths in Christ,*
 - (1) Paul's consistency of life and teaching—*just as I teach everywhere in every congregation.*

Paul plans a return visit to Corinth—4:18-21

- 1) Paul's observation—4:18 ¹⁸ *Now, some have become arrogant,*
 - a) What was the assumption of the arrogant? *as though I were not coming to you^{pl}.*
- 2) Paul's submissive plan—4:19
 - a) The timing—¹⁹ *But I will come to you^{pl} soon, if the Lord wills,*
 - i) cf. 16:5-8; James 4:13-17)
 - b) The purpose—*and I will know,*
 - i) Negatively—*not the talk of those who have become arrogant,*
 - ii) Positively—*but the power.*
 - iii) In essence: whom has the eloquence of the man-centered message genuinely transformed by bringing them to conformity to the crucified and risen Christ?
- 3) Paul's explanation concerning effectiveness—4:20 ²⁰ *For the (spiritual) kingdom of God is not in talk, but in power.*
 - a) Some Texans refer to such men as, "All hat and no cattle."
- 4) Paul's questions—4:21
 - a) Concerning their collective desire—²¹ *What do you^{pl} desire?*
 - b) Concerning the two available options
 - i) Severity—*Shall I come to you^{pl} with a rod,*
 - (1) because of incest—5:1-13; visiting prostitutes—6:12-20; etc.
 - ii) Gentleness—*or in love and a spirit of gentleness?*

Question: Are there areas in your life about which you would prefer our pastor would not teach from the Bible? If so, why? How will you react when he does?