



**1 Corinthians 4:1-5**

**1** This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. **2** Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. **3** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. **4** For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. **5** Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

*What does it mean to be a steward?*

*Being a steward conveys the humility that Paul keeps lifting up and it also communicates having a certain responsibility. Who is Paul ultimately responsible to? (v. 3-4)*

*We are not to judge "before the Lord comes." What does that mean? Are we to make any judgments? What about later in 1 Corinthians with a passage like **1 Corinthians 5:13-14**?*

**1 Corinthians 4:6-7**

**6** I have applied all these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, brothers, that you may learn by us not to go beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against another. **7** For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

*How can we keep ourselves from going beyond what is written (v. 6)? Are there issues about which you wish the Bible was more specific? How can we humbly accept that what God has given us in his Word is enough?*

*Paul frequently references boasting. How is he making his point this time?*

### **1 Corinthians 4:8-21**

**8** Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Without us you have become kings! And would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you! **9** For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. **10** We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. **11** To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, **12** and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; **13** when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things.

**14** I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. **15** For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. **16** I urge you, then, be imitators of me. **17** That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. **18** Some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. **19** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. **20** For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. **21** What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

*What does it mean to be a fool for Christ's sake? How can we live like that?*

*Paul has often times looked like a fool. Read **Acts 26**, in which Paul makes his defense before a Roman ruler. Why does Paul seem foolish here? Why would he risk appearing like a fool?*

*In his mission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, Paul faces great persecution. What does he teach in this passage about how we should react to persecution?*

### **1 Peter 3:9-17**

**9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. **10** For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; **11** let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. **12** For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

**13** Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? **14** But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, **15** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, **16** having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. **17** For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

*What more do we learn here about how to react to persecution? How should we prepare ourselves?*

*How can you apply these Scriptures to your life?*