

A SERVANT'S PRIDE

1 Cor. 3:5-4:7

Christian Science Monitor: "If newspapers based content on reader surveys as television does on ratings, our papers would be mostly comic strips."

What would be the result in the ministry, if pastors were to "go by the ratings"?

That's what the church at Corinth was doing. They had a rating system—to evaluate leaders.

[Their thinking is based on 2 mistaken ideas:]

FALSE CONCEPT OF OUR MESSAGE 1:18-3:4

Our message is not a human message. *No human could have thought it up!*

We shouldn't be following *human* teachers, as if the message were from them!

Our message is from God. He alone deserves credit—NOT MAN!

FALSE CONCEPT OF THE MINISTRY 3:5-4:7

Corinthians elevate one messenger above another. They pick favorites. They're wrong!

All God's ministers are servants.

Their ministers share a common goal: All seek the growth of the body.

Ministers are

* **Servants in God's household 3:5**

These are all working

* **Fellow-workers in God's field 3:6-9a **9a****

* **Master builders on God's building 3:9b-15 **9b-10****

(Not lords)

[expert builders]

All these areas belong to God! NOT us!

We are WORKERS, NOT bosses or owners!

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SERVANT TO THE SENDER 3:5-8

Each of us is a *servant*.

Servants don't give orders. *Servants* aren't exalted.

It wasn't long ago that no one was talking about leaders as servants.

Now everyone *talks* about it—it's popular to *talk* about!

People still don't like to *DO* it.

They may do it for a while, but usually it's *a means to an end*.

Once you get what you want, people don't usually keep serving.

People especially dislike being *treated* like servants!

There aren't many people introducing themselves as professional *servants*!

Basic principles about the role of a *servant*:

1) Each does his part but God gives the fruit 5b-6

Each job isn't all that important.

Jobs are temporary—I do one now; tomorrow someone else will do it.

Growth is the result of GOD's continual working

2) In our own strength we accomplish nothing 7

John 15:5b “Without me, you can do **nothing!**”

What's of *permanent* value is the work God does.

3) We are all one — we're united in the same work.

8a

We all work for one Boss, what matters: that *He* get maximum benefit.

We must work together. No one person can do all the work alone.

- 4) Though we're united in one task, **each of us is responsible to God for what he does.** 8b

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SERVANT TO GOD'S BUILDING 3:9-15

Multipurpose building at GBI. Many worked together.

Someone else started it. They laid a VERY solid foundation.

I had to be sure that *strong* foundation wasn't supporting *weak* walls.

We had to use *good* materials and *skilled* workers.

That's the way we continue building God's church!

The church is *God's* building; *NOT ours!* We're all builders.

Paul laid a solid foundation: the gospel;
others come along to build them up.

Each is accountable for *his* work—to use good materials and careful workmanship.

Principles Paul teaches us about the church, as God's building:

- 1) **All the work is God's work.** 9 "God's" (3X)

Both Paul and his readers belong to God.

- 2) **Many people participate in building** 5-9

Each does his part — each has his own job

God uses different people in different ways in our lives:

One person **models a godly life** before someone

Another **prays quietly** for them

Somebody else gives them a **tract**

Someone **tells them about Jesus.**

Someone **invites them** to a church activity, *like a men's retreat*

Somebody **preaches the gospel** to them in a meeting

Another **asks them** if they wouldn't like to trust Christ

Another **shows them** how to live a godly life

Someone else **teaches them** in a home Bible study

Another **encourages them** when they're having a rough time

We all have a part in God's building!

Pray for 2! "Somebody else led the person I was praying for to Christ!"

3) Someone has to be the master builder 10 = "expert builder"

Master builder is like a foreman—the construction crew leader.

He works hard too. But someone has to be in charge of the crew.

Someone has to lead; doesn't make him "BOSS"! GOD's *our BOSS!*

4) **There can only be one foundation 10a, 11**

Building needs a foundation: **Christ = only adequate foundation.** (Storms)

5) **We must build carefully on the foundation 10b**

If you use cheap stuff, the building won't last.

(Columns at SETECA)

6) **The value of a building is only proven when it is tested 12-15**

Earthquake–fire–hurricane, etc.

Not dealing with eternal condemnation; but with evaluation of service

Reward is based on *permanent* value of materials used.

If material doesn't last, the work is destroyed, but the person is still saved.

(‘with just the shirt on his back!’)

7) A building is only worth the price if it achieves its purpose **16 God's purpose for His church: to reveal God's glory—NOT ours!**

If it doesn't do that, IT FAILS!

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SERVANT TO GOD'S TEMPLE

3:16-17

Illustration file–40 illustrations on drug abuse, etc. = "destruction of the body"

Traditional use related to suicide.

He's not talking about *individuals*, but *the church*.

As *individual* children of God, and as *the body of Christ*, we're **God's temple.**

1 Cor. 6–*Ind.*–We've been left here to reveal God to the world; to glorify Him.

1 Cor. 3–God's servants should build up the church–not damage it; not destroy it.

Play on words–if we destroy it, God will destroy us (= if we ruin it, God will ruin us!)

It's dangerous to focus on leaders, to promote our desires, and *ruin God's church!*

RELATIONSHIP OF THE SERVANT TO HUMAN WISDOM 3:18-23

Servants aren't proud. They aren't famous for their wisdom.

Great philosophers of their day aren't *servants!*

This isn't like *human* wisdom where the thinker gets the credit.

God deserves *all* the credit because He provides *everything!*

EVALUATION OF A GOOD SERVANT 4:1-5

People ought to see us as:

(1) ***Servants (huperetas)– i.e., "helpers"***

—volunteer servants (freemen)

(2) ***Stewards (administrators)***

Principles we learn from this evaluation of a servant:

1) **We're servants, not owners.** We administer what belongs to GOD!

2) **We're responsible for how we use what God has given to us.**

3) **We will be judged on the basis of our FAITHFULNESS**

4) **We're not to judge others before the owner returns.**

"Stop judging ahead of time!" (that's what they're doing—*stop it!!*)

Only the owner has the right to judge.

5) **The opinion of others is not a big deal—it's not all that important**

It's not that he doesn't care at all

2 Cor. 8:20-21 *We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what's right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but **also in the eyes of men.***

Compared to our “Boss,” what *people* think isn’t so important!

6) The Lord doesn't judge according to appearances.

While we may deceive other people, God knows what’s in our heart.

LORD'S OBJECT LESSON—TWO PARABLES speak about our responsibility as stewards:

Matt. 25:14-30 Parable of the talents, deals with the investment of the Master’s money.

Each person is given a responsibility, according to his or her ability.

Those who love Him and want to serve Him use what He has given wisely.

Luke 19:11-27 Parable of the 10 Minas

How servants use the King’s resources makes a statement—about our loyalty to Him.

Each given one mina = laborer's salary for 100 days work—to use for His benefit.

They have to give account.

What have they done with His resources?

One who earned 10 times as much (1000% profit!) is praised and rewarded.

One who earned 5 times as much (500% profit) is also rewarded

RESULTS 16-26

For good servants 19:16-19 Based on faithfulness—NOT quantity

For bad servants 19:20-24a NOT faithful—only concerned about himself

Doesn't use resources for the Master's profit.

He doesn't serve Master on the basis of love. He doesn't seek His benefit.

Fear keeps him from doing what he's commissioned to do: put the funds to work.

Final distribution 19:24b-26

Faithful receive more

Unfaithful lose what they have.

Principle:

those who use resources wisely are entrusted with more.

Those who don't, lose what they have.

Principle of life in general: *"USE IT OR LOOSE IT!"*

If we train our bodies they become increasingly stronger.

If we stop using them, they grow flabby.

We learn Spanish in school, if we use it, we grow in ability.

If we stop using it, we lose ability to speak it.

Spiritual life also: We use resources God has committed to us or lose them.

CENTRAL LESSON FROM THE PARABLES:

The issue is NOT how much you receive to begin with.

In Matt., God determines what each one has to work with

In Luke, everyone receives the same trust.

The issue is NOT how much profit you earn.

In Matt., each earns proportionally same—each doubles the investment

In Luke, each earns a different amount

The issue is FAITHFULNESS

*It's NOT how much we have It's NOT how much we earn
It's **FAITHFULNESS!***

What will we do with the resources God has placed in our hands?

Back to 1 Cor., we ask ourselves:

What are we? Just stewards—called to administer what God has placed in our hands

*How will WE be judged: **Have we been faithful?***

SUMMARY EXHORTATION TO THE SERVANT 4:6-7

**Command not to be proud—World's attitude doesn't fit.
“Don't get proud!”**

**Matt. 20:25-28, Christ said: Concerning the nations: Their
governors— great people**

THEY LORD IT OVER THEM

BUT among YOU, IT'S NOT TO BE THAT WAY

**He who wants to be great, who wants first place ... IS TO
BE A SERVANT!**

Who makes you superior to others?

What do you have that you were not given?

HE gets glory; not us!

**WHAT LESSONS DO WE NEED TO LEARN ABOUT
BEING GOD'S SERVANTS?**

1) This is God's work; not mine nor yours.

2) We are God's SERVANTS.

(Administrators of what's His)

3) God evaluates us based on FAITHFULNESS; not
performance.

of talents received isn't important.

It's **how** we use what we have.

4) The Lord is the Judge.

It's not our place to judge; not even ourselves, much less others.

5) It's not about our image.

We're not in this to create or to maintain a good image.

God knows the intent of the heart. That's what really matters.

6) It's about God's glory!

What are we doing with the resources God has given us?

Are we using what we have to the best of our ability for His good?