



# Blueprint for the Church:

## *Live the Gospel!*

Small Group Study Guide



## 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5 Right Perspective of Church Leadership

This next major section of 1 Corinthians begins a new issue.

In particular, Paul will address the negative perspective that some in the Corinthian church have toward him. But this section really can be a continuation of what he has been dealing with in 1 Corinthians 1-3. In the previous section he deals with the dangerous and harmful affects division can have when the church allows cliquish allegiances and loyalties to exist. In this current section, Paul addresses the right criteria for evaluating church leadership. He gives the Biblical perspective the congregation is to have toward leadership according to God's ***Blueprint for the Church***.

1. John MacArthur states that the "immature believers in Corinth were enamored (much as modern-day believers are) by 'personalities,' that is, high-profile Christian leaders."<sup>1</sup> Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Explain your answer.
2. In his instruction on how he desires to be regarded, Paul presents a God-honoring perspective of church leadership. The following questions dig deeper to see the rich meaning in the words he used to communicate this God-honoring perspective.
  - A "servant" literally means "under-rower." In Paul's day, it became synonymous with anyone who served and was responsible to a higher authority. Why is this an excellent description to use in reference to pastors and church leaders? How does this word counter the mindset that says that the pastor or church leader is ultimately to be responsible to the opinions, desires and ideas of the congregation?
  - A "steward" was one who was hired with the express purpose of having responsibility for the affairs of a household and ensuring that the entire family was provided for with all things needful. Why is this an excellent description to use in reference to pastors and church leaders? Based on this passage, what "needful" thing is required of pastors and church leaders to provide to the family of God?

<sup>1</sup>John MacArthur, *MacArthur Bible Studies: 1 Corinthians: Godly Solutions for Church Problems* (Nashville: Nelson, 2006), p. 25.

Don't Forget:  
*Discuss the Sermon Notes from this week*

<sup>2</sup>John MacArthur,  
*The MacArthur New  
Testament Commentary:  
1 Corinthians* (Chicago:  
Moody, 1984), p. 95.

3. John MacArthur, in reference to this passage, stated that a “popular game played by many Christians is that of evaluating pastors.”<sup>2</sup> What are some of the ways that we tend to “evaluate” the success, effectiveness, or value of a pastor?

- Based on this passage, what is the only criterion that we ought to use in evaluating a pastor or church leader?
- In what way should you expect church leaders and pastors to be “found trustworthy” as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God?

<sup>2</sup>David Prior,  
*The Message of  
1 Corinthians*  
(Downers Grove:  
Inter-Varsity Press,  
1985), p. 63.

4. “In the teaching of this paragraph there is an open door into true freedom for Christian workers.”<sup>3</sup> In what ways is it “freeing” for pastors and church leaders to see their role as a subordinate responsible to Christ and a trustworthy overseer of the mysteries of God?

- Based on this paragraph (vv. 1-5), describe what you think is a right perspective and attitude that the congregation is to have toward those God has called to serve as His servants and stewards, overseeing the church, faithfully handling the mysteries of God.

### **BIBLE MEMORY:**

*Let a man regard us  
in this manner  
as servants of Christ  
and stewards of  
the mysteries of God.*

*1 Corinthians 4:1*

- How does comparing one leader or pastor above another, or the giving of allegiance to one over another, cause unnecessary burden on the pastors and leaders God has called to serve as His servants and stewards?

5. Given enough time, people will disappoint us and do things that we find to be wrong, sub-par, or even hurtful. Pastors and church leaders are not exempt from this either. This is why Paul’s statement in the second part of this paragraph is vitally important.

- What is the right perspective we ought to have toward the evaluations of others when your motives are questioned and criticized, especially when they have determined your actions to be wrong or lacking in some way?
- What tends to be the outcome when people begin to judge others’ motives? How does this relate to what Paul was stating in 1 Corinthians 1-3? How can you guard against this subtle, yet destructive practice of “evaluating” motives of others?

**For Next Week:  
Prayerfully meditate and study the following: Titus 2**