

# Studies In First Corinthians

## (I Corinthians 4:9-21)

1. Did Paul try to use his apostleship to exalt himself?

Not by a long shot: *"For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men"* (I Corinthians 4:9).

- **Matthew 20:26-27, Matthew 23:11, John 13:14-15, I Corinthians 9:19, and Galatians 5:13.**
- The Apostles were made a spectacle [a public show, theatre] to everyone (**Acts 17:16-21, Acts 24:24-27, and Acts 25:22**).

2. Did the Apostles live like kings (i.e. received honor, had material things in abundance, etc.)?

No, they lacked and suffered: *"(10) We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised. (11) Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; (12) And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: (13) Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day"* (I Corinthians 4:10-13).

- The Apostles were seen as fools for Christ (**Acts 26:24**).
- They were looked on as weaklings (**II Corinthians 10:10**).
- Rather than honor, they were despised, defamed, persecuted, and reviled (**Matthew 5:10-12** and **II Timothy 3:11-12**).
- They suffered from hunger and thirst (**II Corinthians 11:26-27**), yet remained content (**Philippians 4:12**).
- Being without a home as a price for the truth (like Jesus; **Matthew 8:20**).
- While worthy of financial support (**I Corinthians 9:9-14**), having to work secularly at times to provide for themselves (**I Thessalonians 2:9**). \*Paul later stated that his working was a disservice to brethren in that they did not do their part in providing support (**II Corinthians 11:8-9**; cf. **II Corinthians 12:13**).
- The Corinthians were "better off" than the Apostles (**I Corinthians 4:8**).

3. Was Paul trying to bring shame to those in Corinth whom were materially better off than the Apostles?

No: *"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you"* (I Corinthians 4:14).

- Not to shame (**II Corinthians 7:3** and **II Corinthians 12:19**), but to warn (**Colossians 1:28**).

4. Did Paul look at himself only as a teacher to those in Corinth?

No, he considered himself more like a father figure: *“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel”* (I Corinthians 4:15).

- **Galatians 4:19, I Thessalonians 2:11, I Timothy 1:1-2, and Titus 1:4.**

5. Did Paul want the Christians in Corinth to follow his example?

Yes: *“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me”* (I Corinthians 4:16).

- **I Corinthians 11:1, Philippians 3:17, II Thessalonians 3:9, and Hebrews 13:7.**

6. What was Timotheus (Timothy) going to come to Corinth and do?

Bring to remembrance the things Paul taught everywhere: *“For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church”* (I Corinthians 4:17).

- Timothy was well aware of what Paul was teaching (II Timothy 3:10).
- Unity means the same things will be taught in all churches of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-6).
- Paul is not saying to teach his own beliefs (Galatians 1:6-12; cf. II John 9-11).

7. What problem did Paul intend to come to Corinth to deal with?

Some were puffed up as though Paul would not come to deal with them: *“Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you”* (I Corinthians 4:18).

- Though with delay (II Corinthians 1:23), Paul was coming (II Corinthians 12:20).
- Face to face accomplishes more than writing (cf. III John 13-14).

8. Were those puffed up in Corinth wise to doubt the boldness of Paul to come and deal with them?

No: *“(19) But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. (20) For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”* (I Corinthians 4:19-20).

- **Acts 13:46-51, Acts 14:19-22, and Acts 21:8-14.**

9. What different approaches did Paul consider when he was thinking of coming to Corinth?

Correction or in love: *“What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness”* (I Corinthians 4:21)?

- He gave them the choice of correction or love and meekness (II Corinthians 13:1-4).