## **Series: Together Toward Maturity**

**Inductive Bible Study Guide: 1 Corinthians 4:1-13** 



### Step 1: Observation – What does the passage say?

Slowly read 1 Corinthians 4:1–13 more than once. Focus on what Paul says about his role as an apostle and how he responds to criticism and pride in the Corinthian church.

#### **Observation Prompts:**

- What terms does Paul use to describe himself and other leaders?
- What contrasts or sarcastic tones do you notice?
- What's repeated or emphasized?
- What is Paul defending or confronting?

Read the passage and write your observations:
How does Paul describe himself and other leaders in verse 1?
What does Paul say about being judged by others—or by himself? (vv.3–5)
What is Paul's warning in verse 6? What does "puffed up" mean here?

What rhetorical or sarcastic contrasts does Paul use in verses 8–10?
What kinds of suffering or treatment does Paul describe in verses 11–13?
Step 2: Interpretation – What does the passage mean?
In this section, Paul is reminding the Corinthians how <b>Christian leaders are to be seen</b> —as <b>servants and stewards</b> —and how pride and spiritual arrogance distort our view of leadership and suffering.
Questions to Explore:
What does it mean that leaders are "servants of Christ" and "stewards of the mysteries of God (v.1)

Why does Paul say it's a "small thing" for him to be judged by others? (vv.3–4) What does this reveal about whose approval matters most?	
n verse 5, what does Paul say the Lord will reveal? What does this teach about waiting for God's judgment instead of passing our own?	
Iow is pride and comparison causing problems in Corinth? (v.6–7)	
What's the purpose of Paul's "sarcastic" contrast in verses 8–10? What does it reveal about the Corinthians' misunderstanding of spiritual leadership?	

How does Paul describe the lifestyle of an apostle in verses 11–13? What is surprising about it
<ul> <li>Word Study Suggestions:</li> <li>Servants (v.1): Greek hypēretēs — literally "under-rower," a low-ranking servant.</li> <li>Stewards (v.1): Greek oikonomos — a house manager or one entrusted with someone else's property.</li> <li>Puffed up (v.6): Greek physioō — inflated, arrogant, self-important.</li> <li>Reviled defamed (v.12–13): describes public abuse and slander.</li> </ul>
Step 3: Application – How should I respond?  This passage invites us to reconsider how we think about leadership, spiritual status, pride,
and humility. Are we willing to be seen as "fools for Christ," or are we seeking comfort, popularity, or applause?
Personal Reflection:
Do I see Christian leaders as celebrities or as servants? How does Paul challenge that view?

Am I seeking human approval or God's approval in how I serve and live?
Where has pride caused me to compare myself to others? How can I grow in humility?
How would my life change if I truly embraced being a "fool for Christ"?
What example of suffering or humility in Paul's words challenges me the most?

# **Summary Truths:**

- Christian leaders are servants and stewards, not celebrities.
- Only God's judgment matters in the end.
- Pride and comparison lead to division and arrogance.

- Apostolic life (and the Christian life) is often marked by **hardship**, not ease.
- True spiritual maturity embraces humility, faithfulness, and the approval of God.

### **Optional Memory Verse:**

"This is how one should regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."
— 1 Corinthians 4:1 (ESV)

### **Prayer Prompt:**

"Jesus, help me live not for the praise of people but for Your 'well done.' Keep me from pride and comparison. Teach me to embrace humility and serve others as You have served me."

### For Further Study:

- Matthew 6:1–6 Seeking the reward of God, not man.
- Galatians 1:10 Living to please God, not people.
- Philippians 2:5–11 Christ's example of humility and servant-leadership.