

## The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians

### Be Imitators of Me

1 Corinthians 4:14-21

1. **A Loving Admonition** (v.14)

God's purpose in choosing the Corinthians was to shame those who are wise, mighty, and noble according to the standard of the world (cf. 1 Cor. 1:26-29). While they likely experienced shame because of it, Paul's purpose in this argument is not to shame the Corinthian believers. His desire is to instruct them how to correct their errors so they will be able to enjoy the blessings of the fellowship of the local church (Col. 1:28; 3:16; cf. 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess 3:15).

2. **A Fatherly Burden** (v.15)

Paul's concern for the Corinthians is personal because he was instrumental in their salvation and the planting of this church (Acts 18:1-11; cf. 1 Cor. 3:6; 9:1-2). They may have a massive number of others who have assumed some responsibility for their Christian life, there is only one earthly spiritual father (cf. Matt 23:9), the man through whose ministry God called them to life (cf. 1 Cor. 1:14-17, 21, 30).

3. **A Faithful Example** (vs.16-17)

Almost certainly, all of the converts in the Corinthian church were first generation Christians. Some may have had believing parents or relatives (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5), but there were no other local Christians to whom they could look and from whom they could learn. They were to look to Paul and copy him as he was imitating Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 11:1). Timothy had proven himself a faithful and trustworthy Christian that Paul could entrust him with not only teaching what is proper but also living according to what is proper as well.

4. **A Powerful Word** (vs.18-20)

There is power in the true wisdom of God, and that power is displayed in the results of both salvation and sanctification. Paul's concern is not that the Corinthians do not understand the truth of the gospel, rather that they merely understand it but are not living as those who have been transformed by it (cf. Rom. 12:1). Believers are not those who merely know the content of true doctrine, both now and in the future when experiencing the fullness of the kingdom of God, those who are in Christ Jesus (cf. 1 Cor. 1:30) know the truth and act in accordance with the truth (cf. 3 John 4).