

1 Corinthians 4

1. When Paul taught the people in Corinth, did he use words or wisdom that were difficult to understand?

-No.

-God through Paul used words and wisdom that were easy to understand.

2. What are some possible problems when teachers use difficult words and wisdom when they are teaching?

-One problem is that people may not understand.

-Another problem is that the people may follow the teacher instead of following God.

3. What does Paul mean when he said that he resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified?

-That Christ's crucifixion on the cross should be the foundation of all of our teaching.

4. How is Christ's crucifixion the foundation of our teaching?

-Without Christ's death on the cross, the teaching about God means nothing.

-Without Christ's death on the cross, no one is saved.

-Without Christ's death on the cross, all people would die and live forever in the Lake of Eternal Fire.

5. What does it mean that Paul came to Corinth in weakness, fear, and with much trembling?

-Paul is talking about his teaching of the Word of God.

6. When we teach in our own strength, where is the strength of God?

-It is not there.

7. When we teach the Word of God, why should we be weak?

-So that God can be strong in us.

8. Instead of teaching with our own wisdom, how should we teach?

-With the power of the Holy Spirit.

9. How do we teach with the power of the Holy Spirit?

-By allowing the Holy Spirit to teach through us.

10. What is the reason for teaching with the power of the Holy Spirit?

-That the people would believe in God, and not in the teacher.

11. Why did Christ not speak on His own, but rather depended on the Father to speak through Him?

-To teach us that we should also allow God to speak and teach through us.

12. What does worldly wisdom do for the church?

-It causes division, and is a barrier to understanding the Word of God.

13. Why can the wisdom of this world not save sinners from eternal death?

-Because the wisdom of this world only speaks about the things of this world which will soon pass away.

14. What is God's secret wisdom?

-It is simply the truths of God that people cannot understand without God's help.

-In chapter 3, God and Paul teach us more about the problem of a lack of unity in the church.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

1-Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly—mere infants in Christ.

2-I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

3-You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

4-For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men?

-In chapter 3, what do God and Paul call the Corinthians?

-Brothers.

-Are God and Paul only talking to the men of the church?

-No.

-When the Bible talks about brothers in the church, it is also talking about the women of the church.

-Just as the Bible is written for both men and women, all of the letters in the New Testament are written for both men and women.

-Although in the Greek language God through Paul wrote "brothers," the meaning is "brothers and sisters."

-While the Christians in Corinth had many sins and many problems, why do God and Paul call them brothers?

-Because in spite of their sins, they were still a part of the family of Christ.

-In spite of all of our sins as Christians, the blood of Jesus has made us a family in Christ.

-If the blood of Jesus has made us a part of the family of Christ, can Satan or our sins take us away from Christ?

-No.

-After calling them brothers, what are God and Paul saying to the Christians in Corinth?

-That they are babies in Christ, and are still of the world.

-Why are God and Paul telling the Corinthians that they are babies and of the world?

-Because there was jealousy and arguing among them.

-While people of the world have jealousy and argue

among themselves, God does not want Christians to be this way.

-To be jealous and to argue not only hurts us, but it also divides the church.

-What does it mean that the Corinthians were babies in Christ?

-Does it mean that the Corinthians were new in their belief in Christ?

-No.

-Paul had taught the Corinthians for one and a half years.

-After Paul left, Apollos came and taught the Corinthians.

-This means that the Corinthians had been taught for years, and were not new Christians.

-The Christians in Corinth were not babies in Christ because their faith was new.

-Why were the Corinthians babies in Christ?

-Because their belief in God had not grown, and they were still acting like people of the world who do not believe in Christ.

-Here is an illustration:

-When a baby is born, mothers nurse their babies with breast milk.

-Yet, after their children grow older, do mothers continue to nurse their children?

-No.

-As children get older, they grow teeth and can eat meat.

-Would it be good if children would only drink milk for all their lives?

-No.

-This was the problem with the Corinthian Christians.

-They had believed in God years ago, but they were still thinking and living like babies.

-They had entered the door of belief in Christ, but no farther.

-When we first believe in God, we know that we have sinned against God, and that only Jesus' death can save us.

-But there are many other truths in the Bible that we do not understand that God wants to teach us.

-When we first believe in God, we still think and live like the people of the world.

-But if we study the Word of God and allow Jesus to change us, we will begin to grow in the Lord.

-If we study the Word of God, we begin to understand what God wants us to do, and we begin to think like God thinks.

-As we allow the Lord to change our thinking, our behavior also begins to change.

-If we do not continue to learn more about our God, our faith remains like the faith of a baby.

-With the faith of a baby, we will also live like babies.

-If our faith, however, is a mature faith like a mature man or a mature woman, our lives will be better.

-Why does the belief of a Christian not grow?

-Is it God's fault?

-No.

-Why does the belief of a Christian not grow?

-Because we refuse to call on God to help our belief to grow.

-Because we refuse to call on God to protect us from the ways of the world, the flesh, and Satan.

-Just like we need God to be saved, we need God to help

our belief to grow, and to protect us from sin.

-When Jesus lived in Israel, He continually called on the Father.

-So we as Christians must continually call on God to help our belief to grow, and to protect us from sin.

-Yet, the Corinthian Christians were still babies in Christ and were living like the people of the world who do not know God's truths.

-The Corinthian Christians were "worldly" because they still thought like the unsaved.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:5

5-What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

-Besides being babies and arguing, what else were the Corinthian Christians doing?

-They were fighting over their teachers.

-Even though Paul and Apollos were both good teachers, was it good for the Corinthians to fight over teachers?

-No.

-What do God and Paul say about teachers of the Word

of God?

-That they are only servants of God.

-All Christians, including pastors and teachers, should be servants of God

-It is when we think that some people in the church are more important than others that we cause division.

-All of God's workers are important, and all of God's work is important.

-To honor one Christian worker above another is to cause division.

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-As a physical body is one and not divided, the Body of Christ should also be one and not divided.

-Besides dividing the church, what are we doing when we honor a Christian worker or a Christian work above another?

-We are honoring people and work above God.

-Why should we only honor God in the church?

-Because it is God alone who enables us to be able to

work with Him and for Him.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

6-I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

7-So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

-When farming in some parts of the world, men and women have different responsibilities.

-The men clear the land so that it can be planted.

-The women plant the grain into the soil.

-But who makes the crops grow?

-Only God.

-Can the men or the women boast for making the crops grow?

-No.

-In Corinth, Paul began the work by planting the Word of God into the hearts of people.

-Afterwards, Apollos watered the hearts of the people by continuing to teach them the Word of God.

-Who, however, caused the fruit of the teaching in Corinth to grow?

-God.

-While people can teach the Word of God, only God can cause the spirits of people to grow.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:8-9a

8-The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.

9-For we are God's fellow workers;

-Before God, what is the purpose of the one who plants and the one who waters?

-That people would grow in their knowledge and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Is the one who plants more important than the one who waters?

-No.

-In God's eyes, all Christians are important and necessary from the planting to the harvesting.

-Even though we cannot make the plants grow, does this mean that we should not work hard?

-No.

-In 1 Corinthians 3:8, we learn that God will reward each one of us according to our own work.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:9b

9-You are God's field, God's building.

-In the verse above, God and Paul teach us by saying that we Christians are God's field.

-Then, the illustration is changed to teach us that we are also God's building.

-Does the church belong to the teachers?

-No.

-Does the church belong to any person?

-No.

-To whom does the church belong?

-The Lord Jesus Christ.

-In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I will build MY church."

-While the church belongs to the Lord Jesus, we are God's fellow workers in God's field.

-While the church belongs to the Lord Jesus, we are also God's fellow builders in God's building.

-God wants us to work alongside of Him to plant and water the fields of God.

-God wants us to work alongside of Him to build the

building of God.

-As we learned in Ephesians 2:22, all Christians are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:10-11

10-By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.

11-For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

-What part of the building was Paul responsible for?
-The foundation.

-When we build a house, how important is the foundation?

-The foundation is the most important part of the building.

-If a house has a good foundation, then the house will not fall.

-If a house has a weak foundation, then the house will fall.

-Here is what Jesus taught about foundations:

Let's read Matthew 7:24-27

24-"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

25-The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

26-But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.

27-The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

-What happened to the wise man who built his house on the rock?

-When the rain and wind came, his house did not fall.

-What happened to the foolish man who built his house on sand?

-When the rain and wind came, His house fell with a great crash.

-As an expert builder, what was the foundation that Paul built?

-Jesus Christ.

-Is there another foundation upon which we can build to have eternal life?

-No.

-The Lord Jesus Christ is the only foundation upon which we can build unto eternal life.

-After Paul left Corinth, Apollos and other teachers came and began to build on top of the foundation which Paul had built.

-For this reason, God and Paul warn us about building properly on the foundation of Jesus.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:12-13

12-If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,

13-his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.

-Why are God and Paul warning us about building properly on the foundation of Christ?

-Because our work on earth as Christians will be tested.

-What is the work that God and Paul are talking about?

-First, it is important to understand that God and Paul are talking only to Christians, and not to non-Christians.

-After Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts, all of the letters in the New Testament are written only to Christians.

-Secondly, it is also important to understand that God and Paul are not talking about our salvation.

-As we have learned, we cannot work for our salvation as God only accepts the work of Christ on the cross for our salvation.

-What is the work that God and Paul are talking about?

-Our work for God as Christians while we live on the earth which will be revealed and tested at the end of the world.

-When will our work on earth be revealed and tested?

-At the end of the world which the Bible calls the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Co 1:8).

-To build upon the foundation of Christ, we can use gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw.

-In 1 Corinthians 3:12, what would be the gold, the silver, or the costly stones?

-The work of a Christian who allows God to work through him or her.

-In this same verse, what would be the wood, the hay, or the straw?

-The work of a Christian who does not allow God to work through him or her.

-What will happen if we allow God to work through us?

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:14

14-If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.

-If our work for the Lord is done according to the Word of God, will it burn?

-No.

-Will our work using gold, silver, or costly stones endure?

-Yes.

-If our work for the Lord is done according to the Word of God, what will we receive?

-A reward.

-When Paul built the foundation of the Lord Jesus in Corinth, he used only gold, silver, and costly stones.

-Paul did his work carefully so that the Corinthians would believe in the Lord Jesus alone as their foundation.

-There are Christians, however, who do not do their work according to the Word of God.

-These people teach that which is not in the Word of God.

-These people try to get people to follow them instead of following Christ.

-What is the only work that is acceptable to God?

-Work that is according to the Word of God.

-Teaching which is according to the Word of God is like a house of gold, silver, and precious stones.

-Teaching which is from a teacher's own ideas and not according to the Word of God is like a house of wood, hay, and straw.

-What will happen if we do not allow God to work through us?

Let's read 1 Corinthians 3:15

15-If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

-Will a work using wood, hay, or straw endure?

-No.

-If our work is not done according to the Word of God, what will happen?

-It will be burned up.

-Concerning our work here on earth, what will the Lord Jesus do at the end of the world?

-Christ will reveal and test our work to see if it according to His Word.

-In 1 Corinthians 3:15, who is the one who “he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames”?

-A Christian whose works while on earth were not acceptable to God.

-Although he would be saved, his works would be burned because they were not done as God said.

-Does this mean that the Christian will be burned?

-No.

-Will a Christian whose works are burned be lost or saved?

-No.

-As we have learned, there is no punishment for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

-However, will a Christian whose work is not done according to the Word of God receive a reward?

-No.

-What is an example of a Christian whose work is burned?

-He will be like a man who escaped from a burning house.

-Even though his house and all of his belongings were burned up, the man was able to escape.

-Why is this a serious warning?

-Because at the end of our lives, Christ will reveal and test our work.

-If our work is according to His Word, we will receive a reward.

-If our work is not according to His work, then our work will count for nothing.

-God wants all Christians to help Him in His work.

-It is important to remember to do our work for the Lord according to the Word of God.