

WEEK 6: 1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-15

INTRO: What can you remember about these Christians and the things Paul has been emphasizing to them up to this point?

worldliness, Divisions over leaders, God chooses the weak things to shame the wise, human wisdom v's God's wisdom, illustrations about the importance of the church field, building, temple

1. One major hallmark of the Corinthian Christians was a worldly attitude to their leaders. As you READ 1 COR 4:1-7 make a note of the way a godly man thinks about Christian life and leaders.

He is a servant of Christ, i.e. high status in that he is appointed by Christ, low status in that he is merely a servant; therefore the judgment that matters comes from his master; they should be slow and careful in their judgments; don't be puffed up in following one leader over another; all you have is a gift from God

• Paul cares very little about the way the Corinthians judged him. What does he care about? In what ways does his example apply to us as we judge or are judged?

he cares about God's verdict on him. We need to remember that we are to please God irrespective of other people's opinions but we are also to remember that when we judge others that we should be mindful of God's judgment on us!

2. It appears that some worldly-wise teachers had come among the Corinthians and taught these babies that they had "outgrown" Paul.

IN PAIRS make two lists. In one note the way the Corinthians think of themselves and in the other the way they (and the world) think of Paul and the other apostles.

The worldly Corinthians attitude to themselves	The worldly attitude to Paul
Satisfied, already kings reigning	Hungry, thirsty, scum of the earth Work hard with their hands, cursed, persecuted
So wise in Christ	Fools for Christ
Strong	Weak
Honoured	Dishonoured

• How would this mistaken mindset have caused the Corinthians to regard Paul?

As a loser!

• How would you contrast Paul's attitude to life in this age? What resolutions would this require from the faithful Christian?

Life in this age will involve great hardship and the dismissal of the world. We mustn't pursue it. We must be single minded in pursuing God's approval. We need to be willing to suffer with Christ and be considered a fool for His sake

3. The Corinthian idea is called "triumphalism". It's alive and well in the Christian world today. In what ways might it impact those who hold it? What examples can you think of?

It can create a pride that if life is comfortable we are under God's blessing and that those who are struggling are obviously doing something wrong, inadequate faith etc. By the same token, if we should suffer we will wonder what God is doing with us and we will therefore tend to seek the easy road. Symptoms will be pride, worldliness, pleasure seeking and confusion

• Consider the first three verses of the next paragraph. (14-16) What's the big danger for the Corinthians and for all those captured by triumphalism?

• Pray for wisdom, clear mindedness, perseverance and grace in the way we handle worldly attitudes to life in this age.