

1 Corinthians 4:14-21 (April 3, 2022)

OPENING QUESTION:

SERMON DISCUSSION: How were you impacted by the sermon? What new thoughts or lessons did you discover? In what ways did you find yourself challenged and/or encouraged?

READ 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

1. How does this passage along with 2 Corinthians 11:2, 12:14-15; Galatians 4:19 and 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 reveal Paul's heart and behavior as a father?

2. Explain why or why not you think in this passage Paul is contradicting what he said previously regarding:

Following other leaders (1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 3:1-5, 4:15-16)?

Not boasting (1 Corinthians 1:29, 31, 4:15-16; 1 Timothy 1:12-16)?

3. Paul urged the Corinthians to "be imitators of me." They may have found it challenging to imitate someone who was absent. How did Paul remedy this challenge?

4. "Timothy's role is to be a bridge between Paul and the Corinthians, and a reminder of Paul's way of life, 'which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.'...Discipleship is a combination of doctrine ('what I teach everywhere') and practice ('my way of life'). Good teaching is essential, but transformation happens when people not only teach but actually live out the Christian faith in front of us, showing us how the cross shapes our work, our relationships and our finances and in this case our unity and humility in Christ."
(1 Corinthians For You p. 44-45 by Andrew Wilson)

Review your experience of discipleship. Who you are influenced by, and whom do you influence?

5. Paul, as a father, who out of love admonishes his "beloved children" feels an urgency to go to his children. What does he say his return is dependent upon? What does this say about Paul? What do you learn that is helpful in viewing the urgent matters you face?

6. "Paul as a pastor, does not seek confrontation, even if he cannot rule it out. **Love** may require firmness; it 'never gives up; never falls apart' (1 Cor.13:7-8). Nevertheless, it 'builds' (1 Cor. 8:1); 'waits patiently...shows kindness...never tires of [giving] support (1 Cor.13:4-7).
(1 Corinthians-A Shorter Exegetical & Pastoral Commentary p. 80 by Anthony C. Thiselton)

Discuss Thiselton's quote and how it might reveal the intent of Paul's questions to the Corinthians, "What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? (1 Corinthians 4:21)