



# CROSS CHURCH

DISPLAY THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL

## **Scripture | 1 Corinthians 4.14-21**

The final verses in chapter 4 ties together what Paul has been saying. First, he addressed himself directly. He was a faithful servant of Christ. Then, he focused attention on Corinth. Since they wanted to unfairly scrutinize his calling as an apostle, maybe it was time for the church to consider her choices and lack of maturity. Now, the apostle addresses in a genuine fatherly tone. They must jettison the world's ideas and pursue a long obedience by following Christ in the model of Paul. Disciple-making is the basic command of Christ to his church. Every believer ought to address two basic questions. Who instructs and guides my walk? And who am I instructing and helping?

## **Observation**

### **READ 1 Cor 4.14-15 | Followers of Jesus have spiritual fathers.**

What “things” was Paul referring to that he had written the Corinthians that might have shamed them? (4:7-9, 10; 3:1-2) Why might these things have shamed them?

Why was shame not his primary motivation? In what way is admonishing a better but more difficult motivation?

How did Paul think of the Corinthians? How did his posture toward them set the tone for his interaction with them?

What posture should set the tone for our interaction with other believers? How can we foster an appreciation for our brothers and sisters at FMFB as “beloved?”

What does Paul remind them of that they have in abundance? How is it true that followers of Jesus can have many guides—one who has responsibility for someone who needs guidance, guardian, leader—in Christ?

Why would Paul emphasize that they did not have many fathers? In what ways do believers have spiritual fathers?

What makes a father different from a guide or guardian? Why might both be necessary?

How had Paul become their spiritual father? How does the gospel work so that followers of Jesus have spiritual fathers?

How do we know that Paul was less concerned about gender or kinship and more about function? (2 Tim 1:5; Titus 1:1-4)

What is the role of a spiritual father (mother)? How have you benefitted from a spiritual father or mother? Who might you say is a spiritual son or daughter to you?

### **READ 1 Corinthians 4.16-17 | Spiritual fathers teach by example.**



Since Paul is their spiritual father, what does he tell the Corinthians to do? Why does he make his appeal so forceful?

What does his appeal to imitation presume about his life? (11:1) Why would imitation be the practice he urges?

If correcting wrong thinking and wrong practice makes imitation important, what might that mean for us as a church as we make disciples? How might imitation be a corrective for isolation and individualism that is so harmful in our contemporary church context?

Why does imitation make “virtual” church or internet congregations a limited tool at best? Why should our steady practice be to gather together for worship and devotion to apostolic teaching?

How does Paul say that he will help the Corinthians in imitating him? How is Timothy a real-time example of exactly what Paul was telling and urging the Corinthians toward?

What does Paul say about Timothy that should inform how the Corinthians (and us) imitate Paul? Why is the Paul-Timothy relationship applicable for all believers?

What things do you do that imitates Paul, and those who have come after Paul, as they imitate Jesus? What might you need to change for someone imitating you to be a reminder to others of what a life in Christ should look like?

How is it true that spiritual fathers teach by example? Why does that bring joy? (3 John 1-4)

### **READ 1 Corinthians 4.18-21 | Spiritual fathers correct out of love.**

How does Paul’s approach become very direct now? Why would that be necessary?

Who does he seem to be addressing? What does he emphasize to them?

What could make Paul suggest that he will find out about their “power?” Why was power the issue?

What correction does Paul offer in v20? What might he mean about the kingdom of God and talk/ power?

How does the kingdom of God function with a different understanding of power than might be considered by the world to be power? How might the understanding of the Corinthians about power have been betrayed by the things they said? (1:17-19)

Why are power, popularity, influence temptations for everyone, even followers of Jesus? How might those temptations become noticeable in our speech as well as our actions?

Why are temptations to power, popularity, influence so often associated with arrogance? How is kingdom power the corrective for arrogance?

How does Paul display rightful power and authority in what he asks the Corinthians in v21? What was Paul’s hope?

Why does the job description of spiritual father include the task of correction? If you were imitating Paul/ Jesus what would characterize that correction?

What is your preferred manner of being corrected by a spiritual father or leader? How might your preference help you to know how to correct a spiritual son/ daughter?

Why are spiritual fathers who teach by example and correct out of love God's good gifts to followers of Jesus?

## **Application**

1. What stuck out to you or challenged you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text? How did the Spirit move you to respond?
2. If someone were to ask you what it means to disciple someone, what ideas or actions would you include in your response? Why did you pick those?
3. Is disciple-making optional for the people of God? Is it the sole responsibility of the pastor and/or other leaders? Who is responsible to make disciples? Why?
4. Is it arrogant for a 'Paul' to tell a 'Timothy' believer to follow his model for Christian practice?
5. Are there any Christian mentors, teachers, or leaders whose actions you seek to imitate as a fully devoted Christ follower? How has their example shaped your walk with Christ?
6. What would need to change for you to live the kind of life you want others to imitate?
7. Are there any younger believers for whom you are modeling how to be "all in" with your faith? Who has God placed in your life for you to lead in this way?
8. What steps should a mature believer take before confronting and correcting another believer? What is the difference between correction and criticism? How can we guard against the later?
9. Have you ever experienced loving confrontation from a trusted Christian friend? What was the outcome?
10. Why is growing in our understanding of the details of our faith a lifelong journey?
11. Why is gathering as the body required to faithfully correct and be corrected? Can we imitate one another well if we are not regularly with one another?
12. How are you personally growing in Christ right now? How can your own discipleship fuel your obedience to be a disciple maker for others?
13. What are some ways you could proclaim Jesus and make disciples more intentionally?

## **Prayer**

1. Pray that the Lord will teach us all to be disciples who make disciples.
2. Pray for the extended family of Ryan & Michelle Tankersley as they begin their work in Fukuoka.
3. Pray for Jim Richards, Kie Bowman, and Danny Forshee as they lead the work of the SBTC.
4. Pray for students who hear the gospel at every club to respond to God's invitation.
5. Pray God plants other churches through us which will plant more churches & make more disciples.

## Observations & Prayer Requests

- **MY THOUGHTS** | Record insights and questions from the group experience.

- **MY RESPONSE** | Note specific ways you'll put into practice the truth explored this week.


- **MY PRAYERS** | List specific prayer needs and answers to remember this week.



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