

"What Do You Have That You Did Not Receive?"

1 Cor 4:6-7

Celebrating the Centrality of Christ in the Local Assembly

Contentment comes by accepting who we are and what we have as grace gifts from God. And this also operates within the framework of all relationships.

It is important to remember that the Corinthian Church was dividing over people and personalities. The issue was not theology or doctrine, but P-E-O-P-L-E. Yet Paul has clearly shown that people are "merely men" (3:4) and that "neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (3:7). Because this is true, "Let no one boast in men" (3:21).

Paul's point in verses 6 and 7 is direct and pointed. If what we are as ministers and as people is because of what we have received from the Lord, why would we compare one with another and why would we boast in the gift given instead of the giver of the gift?

- I. We should accurately evaluate leadership and people's individual giftedness (v. 6a)

In the first part of verse 6 Paul says, "That which I have said of myself holds true of all." The part represents the whole. Thus Paul is saying, "What I have said of myself and Apollos, I have shown to hold true of all Christian teachers."

- A. Leaders are gardeners (3:5-9)
- B. Leaders are builders (3:10-17)
- C. Leaders are stewards (4:1-5)

- II. We should not compare ourselves against another person's gifting (v. 6b)

The Scripture is clear on this, if we consider ourselves something more than what we are, than we are in danger of having a big-head. What follows are the reasons as to why those who are "puffed up" are out of place.

- III. We should not put leadership on a level of superiority (v. 7a).

"What right have you to separate on the ground of differing opinions and differing capacity?"

- IV. We should recognize that all we possess has been gifted to us (v. 7b)

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It is tragic when we consider ourselves to be owners when we are nothing but stewards.

V. We should never boast as to what we have earned and possess (v. 7c)

The Corinthians were boasting in something other than in Christ (1:31).

Grace leads to gratitude and humility. Whatever we are, we are by the gifting of God that is an expression of His grace. Consider with me the following passages (Rom 12:3-8, 1 Cor 12:4-11, 1 Pt 4:10, 11).

WHY DO THE DIFFERENCES EXIST WITHIN ANY LOCAL FELLOWSHIP AND WITHIN THE BODY OF CHRIST AT LARGE? Here is the reason why, “God created unlimited diversity into His body as an expression of Himself.”

The diversity that exists inside of the body of Christ and especially inside of a local fellowship is not because of contrast and comparison but for concord and celebration. We do not divide over our differences; we are to joy in our differences.