

I Corinthians 4:8-21

Imitators of Christ

Introduction:

When we think about making disciples we are actually saying to them, 'follow me,' Fathers would like their children to imitate them. Father's hope and pray their child will turn out to be all that he has never succeeded in being. Most of us at times are guilty of saying to our children or disciples not to "do as I do" but "do as I say." Paul however is quite serious when he says, to his children in the faith, "follow me, imitate me, and copy me."

In order to be able to say this we all must have our lives in order and especially to know what the Scriptures teach obeying its precepts.

I. The Dangers of Self-Sufficiency – v.8-13

A. Living in ease – v.8

1. Having no lack with material and spiritual possessions – Matt. 5:6
2. The attitude of being rich – Rev. 3:17

B. Sarcasm

1. If they were rich spiritually they would have honored their teachers
2. If they were kings they would not have the spirit of independence

C. The Plight of the Apostles

1. They were "spectacles" Gk. "theatron" (Angels watching- I Cor. 11:10; I Tim. 5:21; I Pet. 1:12
2. They were courageous fools for Christ – v.10; I John 2:15; II Cor. 12:10
3. They suffered hardships – II Cor. 12:10; Turn To: II Cor. 11:23-28
4. They earned their living – v.12; (Acts 18;; 20:34; I Cor. 9:6; II Thess. 2:9; II Thess. 3:8)
5. They had inadequate food, drink and clothing.
6. They were "slandered" – v.13a I Peter 2:23
7. They were considered the scum of the earth – v.13b; II Cor. 10:10; Phil. 4:13

II. The Necessity of Following Your Mentors – v. 14-21

A. Paul's purpose for correction – 6:5; 15:34

B. Admonishment – v.14 (Gk. Noutheteo) "to criticize in love" Eph. 6:4

C. Fathers – v.15

1. Spiritual fathers – Philemon 1:10
2. Paul's jurisdiction over the Corinthians

D. Exhortation – v.16

1. Imitate me – v.16 (doctrine and life)
2. Application:
 - a. ***We are to follow our pastors as they follow Christ – I Thess. 1:6; See I Cor. 11:1***
 - b. ***We are to imitate our pastors because the message of the gospel has revealed its power through them.***
3. Timothy's ministry – v.17
4. The Kingdom of God – v.20; Turn To: I Cor. 6:9-11 (ICor. 15:24,50)

Conclusion v.21

1. ***Will the Lord chasten and rebuke us?***
2. ***Will the Lord commend us for our obedience?***

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