Mt. Carmel BP/Grace Baptist/CIC/CIC Dr. Rick Griffith

2 & 30 August 1998/1 April 07/7 Oct 12 Message 5 of 24

NIV 40 Minutes

**How’s Your View?**

Title

***1 Corinthians 4***

**Topic:** Leadership

**Attribute:** God’s Leading

**Subject:** Treat elders with a biblical balance

**Complement:** —as faithful and humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers with authority

**Purpose:** Listeners will respect their pastors for their humility yet still follow them for their spiritual leadership.

# Introduction

### We’ve talked about *angels* some at this church, but what about *angles*? Depending on one’s angle, things can look very different!

Angles

#### You can make a tower lean…

Arm

Hoop

Tower

#### Really make your point with the referee…

#### Get those three pointers despite a very stiff style…

#### You can see a mirror transported by a headless man…

Mirror

#### Kiss the Sphinx in Egypt…

Sphinx

#### Or even sport the lower half of Queen Elizabeth’s face!

Dollar

### We also have different angels on how to treat leaders today. This is especially true in the church…

Church

Leadership

#### Is a pastor supposed to be a CEO—or just one of the guys?

#### Should we expect more of elders than of men who are not elders—after all, every elder also has feet of clay?

#### Do we treat ministry heads differently at church than we do department heads at work? Why? Or why not?

### Background: The past few weeks we’ve been looking at the first-century church at Corinth—a body of believers that ended up exalting *human* leaders.

Parties

#### In 1 Corinthians 1:12 Paul already addressed the wrong way to treat the apostles—by overly exalting them. This view had split the church into various parties [read].

• PAP

##### First, there was the PAP (Paul Action Party).

##### Then there was the AYE (Apollos Yippee, Esquire).

• AYE

##### Another leadership faction was the CTE (Cephas Triumphs Enterprise).

• CTE

##### The final division was the SDP (Savior Development Party).

• SDP

##### Dividing into groups competing over the so-called “best” leader was the *wrong* way to treat the apostles.

#### Now in chapter 4 Paul gives the *right* way to consider the apostles—and all spiritual leaders, for that matter.

### Subject: So the issue addressed in 1 Corinthians 4 is, “How should we view our spiritual leaders—especially our elders and pastor-teachers?” This is the question addressed in your message outline. What’s a biblical perspective of their role?

Subject

### Need: Why talk about leaders today though—what’s so special about today?

Need

#### This is important because I am preaching through each chapter of 1 Corinthians, so I trust that God wants to talk to us about this issue right now.

#### But I also remember struggling with my role the first time I was a pastor. Did I lead or serve? It’s a helpful review for me and for other leaders here.

#### You also know that we are looking for more elders and other ministry leaders here at CIC. As others step into leadership here as elders and other roles, it’s good for us to ask…

### So how should we treat our leaders? Paul gives us two handles on this issue: verses 1-13 and verses 14-21. Note first that Paul says in verses 1-13 to…

2 ways

# I. Honour your leaders for their humility (1-13).

MP

[Recognize their willingness to humbly serve.]

## Treat spiritual shepherds as faithful stewards accountable to God (1-5).

SP

 [See them as servants answering not to your opinion, but to God’s.]

### Paul exhorted the church to view him and the apostles as servants and stewards (1-5).

#### Apostles were *servants* of Christ (4:1a).

##### The word for servant here is not the same as “slave” but instead “an assistant to someone in an official position.” UBS translator’s handbook (Blomberg, 88)

##### So Paul’s saying, “Hey, view me as Christ’s assistant—not the King himself!”

##### Sometimes I’ve heard comments like, “Our pastor is not a very good CEO at all!” It’s easy to forget that *Jesus* is the head of the church—the Christ Executive Officer.

• Christ

• CEO

##### On the other hand, some of us view the pastor as the only one in the church with 40 bosses! Remember that Paul says he was a servant of *Christ*, not an employee who follows the whim of each church member.

#### Apostles also were to be faithful *stewards* accountable to Christ (4:1b-5).

Black

##### Verses 1b-2 in the NIV refer to a “house manager” or what the KJV and NASB call a “steward.” A steward in Paul’s day managed the assets of another. We don’t use this word much now, but the concept stays with us. Now we call him an investment banker, for example. He may be responsible to manage $10 million in the bond market, but the money isn’t his!

##### But in verse 3 does Paul say he’s not accountable to the Corinthians?

###### No, he’s saying that ultimately the Lord’s opinion counts, not people’s or even our view of ourselves.

###### We can deceive ourselves into thinking we’re really something for God.

###### But our own opinion of ourselves actually counts very little.

Two farmers once envied each other and always tried to outdo one another. This jealousy would always come to a head at the town’s annual horse race. Generally one or the other farmer’s horse won.

Then one farmer came up with a great idea—to hire a professional jockey to ride his horse. He did and the idea proved a good one, for his horse was far in the lead. Then at the last hurdle the horse stumbled, throwing both horse and rider onto the ground.

Just then the other farmer’s horse came over the hurdle and, surprised at the confusion, also fell down and threw its rider.

But the professional jockey was quicker and, jumping on the horse, ran across the finish line first.

Proud of himself, he was delighted to see the owner running toward him—at least he was delighted until he saw the look on the farmer’s face, livid with anger.

“What’s wrong?” the jockey spoke, “Sure I fell, but I won the race!”

“Yeh, you won the race,” the farmer steamed, “On the wrong horse!”

You see, it’s not our own opinion of ourselves that matters! It’s what the judge says!

##### So in verse 5 Paul says not to judge before the appointed time. They were trying to judge who was the best leader to follow—Paul, Apollos, or Peter.

(What’s here for us in terms of how we view our spiritual leaders?)

### We need to realize that our leaders ultimately will account to God rather than us.

Faithful

#### Account for what? Whether Crossroads ends up becoming the largest church? With the best music? the most stimulating sermons? No, our elders will be judged whether they’ve been faithful as verse 2 requires!

Steward

#### Faithful to do what? By review, remember that elders have three basic pastoral tasks—to teach, protect, and lead.

3 tasks

(So Paul says that we need to treat leaders as faithful stewards accountable to God. Related to this is the exhortation in verses 6-7 to…)

## Evaluate elders by scriptural standards—not worldly ones (6-7).

SP

[Judge them by God’s leadership criteria, not popular opinion.]

### Let’s not go beyond biblical requirements for leadership selection (4:6a).

#### The phrase “what is written” generally refers to Scripture, so Paul warns us to assess leaders biblically rather than through our own personal lenses and biases.

#### And where are these requirements? 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Godly Character

##### These texts require us to test a man’s *character* to see if he is a faithful steward. Not ability but faithfulness!

17 slides

##### Here are some of the qualities God looks for… [Titus 1 & 1 Tim. 3 lists].

#### Sometimes I wonder if even Paul would have been accepted as the leader of most churches today. I can just see the Search Committee interviewing him:

Would Paul pass?

##### “OK, do you have a prison record?” (“Well, yes, four times”)

##### “Oh, yes, I hear that generally there is a riot when you come into town. Well, then, please explain where you attended seminary” (“Uhh, no seminary—but I was trained by Gamaliel, one of the top rabbis in the Roman Empire.”)

##### “What?” the committee responds, “That legalist?”

##### “OK… I see that you have been in ministry over 30 years, but what’s the longest you served a single church?” (“I stayed in Ephesus once for over two years.”) “Huh? In 30 years this was your longest ministry?!”

(Do you see how we easy it is to have a haughty spirit when we stray from biblical criteria for leaders? There’s a wonderful result of using biblical guidelines…)

### Being biblical will protect the church from pride shown in comparing leaders (4:6b-7).

6b-7

#### I once became proud from making a worldly choice in a Christian leader.

Black

##### Dean was experienced overseas, promoted himself well, completed our entire application process in three days, was a PhD candidate, made high dollar salaries—so I advocated paying him well in our Christian organization.

##### Yet within months I saw that not using God’s criteria was disastrous. We just barely averted him taking us to court! And I was humbled!

#### The next leader I helped select was opposite—a more biblical choice!

##### Joe was not as outwardly impressive and not as experienced, yet faithful to his wife for 30 years, not concerned about pay so much, a genuine heart.

##### Guess which one made the better leader?!

(So we should see elders as faithful stewards and do so through biblical criteria. How else should we treat our leaders? Verses 8-13 say to…)

## Recognize your leaders’ humble sacrifices to lead you (8-13).

SP

[Appreciate their selfless suffering on your behalf.]

### [Paul uses sarcasm here to show how the Corinthians exalted themselves] (4:8).

#### Ahhh, yes. Biblical sarcasm! But why?

#### He wanted to show how much the people had exalted themselves.

### In contrast, Paul humbled himself with the apostles who suffered for Christ (4:9-13).

#### In NT times, the conquering Roman army paraded through Rome to the cheers of the crowds. The victorious general rode out in front on horseback, followed by his soldiers on foot, and last of all were the vanquished foes in chains. These prisoners were not killed on the battlefield so they would be killed in the Roman arena for the amusement of the audience.

Procession

#### Paul says the apostles are like these condemned, weak, humble prisoners but the Corinthians are the honored, strong, victorious kings.

### I wonder how much we really appreciate our leaders’ humble sacrifices to lead us.

#### I have served in many types of Christian ministry—musician, missionary, discipler, chaplain, international student consultant, Bible college professor—yet being a pastor was by far the most difficult ministry with the most sacrifices.

#### I pray that you will genuinely appreciate the sacrifices of the elders you elect in the coming months. Don’t be like the Corinthians who simply expect sacrifice!

(So up to verse 13 Paul encourages us to honour leaders for their humility. Recognize their faithful service, evaluate them by biblical criteria rather than your biases, and appreciate their sacrifices for Christ and us. Now let’s see the flip side. Good spiritual leaders are humble, yet still you must…)

MPI

# II. Respond to your elders’ spiritual authority (14-21).

MP

#  [Correct your behaviour based on your leaders’ fatherly guidance in three ways.]

## First, fathers admonish (4:14-15).

Admonish

### Many people have input into my sons’ lives, but it’s mostly my job to warn them.

### Like the proverb, “Better are wounds from a friend than kisses from an enemy.”

## Fathers also set an example of godliness (4:16-17).

Example

### Paul exhorted them to follow his example (4:16).

Eisenhower

#### "General Eisenhower used to demonstrate the art of leadership with a piece of string. He'd put it on the table and say: pull it and it'll follow you wherever you wish. Push it and it will go nowhere at all. It's just that way when it comes to leading people. They need to follow a person who is leading by example." (LEADERSHIP example)

String

#### How many of us would say “follow my example”?

### Paul was a sermon walking—and when he couldn’t walk there personally, he sent Timothy to remind them of his godly lifestyle (4:17).

## Fathers not only admonish and set examples, but also discipline stubborn kids (4:18-21).

Discipline

### Child discipline went out of style in the 1960s in America—and now the US is reaping the consequences! In response to the permissiveness of the age, the Christian psychologist named Dr. James Dobson wrote his book *Dare to Discipline.*

### Paul also dared to discipline. He didn’t fear using his authority—in love!

### Friends, we must respond to our spiritual leaders who correct us.

#### People don’t like correcting-type of sermons! We want affirmation sermons all the time! Sure, both are needed, but I think we hear too little about correction.

#### Church discipline is little practiced here in Singapore—it’s rare in America too.

##### I have lived in Singapore over 21 years and yet I have not yet heard of a single case in which the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 were followed.

##### Why? Is it because the Singapore Church is such a holy church that discipline is not necessary? Or could it be because we have become too lax in expecting Christians to act like Christians? To be a member here you must willingly submit to our elders when they need to discipline towards restoration.

(So what’s Paul really saying in this chapter? I think it’s this…)

# Conclusion

### Treat elders with a biblical balance—as faithful and humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers with authority (M.I.).

MI

### Recognizing the spiritual authority of elders is especially needed in churches like ours that emphasize congregational authority. It’s also noted in two other key texts:

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”

1 Thess

#### Hebrews 13:17 reminds us, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Heb 13:17

Mt. Carmel BP Church & Grace Baptist Church Dr. Rick Griffith

2 & 30 August 1998 Message #5

NIV 40 Minutes

**How’s Your View?**

***1 Corinthians 4***

**Topic:** Leadership

**Subject:** Treat pastors with a biblical balance

**Complement:** —as faithful and humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers.

**Purpose:** Listeners will respect their pastors for their humility yet still follow them for their spiritual leadership.

# Introduction

### Zao Ahn! [Nee Men How] Don’t worry—I promise not to preach in Chinese! English is a strange enough language to me…

#### Some weeks ago one of my boys asked me how much ham was in hamburgers. “None,” I replied. Yes, differing ideas come to mind when we say “hamburger.”

#### Earlier this year a Chinese national asked why we eat dogs. “We don’t eat dogs!” I said. He said, “But what about ‘hot dogs’…”

#### “Sandwich” is another confusing word since it is neither.

#### But some Chinese words are also kinda funny—like “chopsticks,” which are useless for chopping.

### These words convey concepts which can be confusing, so different ideas come to mind. Perhaps the same could be said of the word “pastor.” What should he do?

#### Some think a pastor should do everything (“Pastor for Growing Church”—McRae).

#### Others take business management techniques and bring them to the pastorate. Years ago we never heard of an “executive pastor,” did we?

### Subject: So how should we treat our spiritual leaders—especially our pastors? This is the question addressed in your bulletin sermon outline. What’s a biblical perspective of their role? I remember struggling with my role when I was a pastor. Did I lead or serve?

### Let me say that no one put me up to this!

#### The pastors and deacons didn’t even know what I would preach until this week!

#### I’ve just been preaching through 1 Corinthians this year as I have opportunity to speak and now we have come to this topic in chapter 4.

#### But I also think this kind of message is easier to hear from a “non-pastor” like me. While I have served as a pastor, I’m not pastoring this church, so I have little to lose and little to gain. Hopefully that will help me be more objective.

#### I trust that as we move into more serious discussions this week with one or two potential candidates for senior pastor, God had His hand in the preaching schedule many months ago for us to address this topic today.

### What we really need is to go to the Word to get God’s view on spiritual leaders, right? Good thing Paul addressed leadership issues in the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians.

#### Before this point in the book, he’s already addressed the wrong way to treat the apostles—by overly exalting them. Chapter 1, verse 12 shows how this view had split the church into various parties [read].

##### First, there was the PAP (Paul Action Party).

##### Then there was the AYE (Apollos Yippee, Esquire).

##### Another leadership faction was the CTE (Cephas Triumphant Enterprise).

##### The final division was the SDP (Saviour Development Party).

##### Dividing into groups competing over the so-called “best” leader was the *wrong* way to treat the apostles.

#### Now in chapter 4 Paul gives the *right* way to consider the apostles—and all spiritual leaders, for that matter.

### So how should we treat our pastors? It seems that Paul gives us two handles on this issue: verses 1-13 and verses 14-21. Note first that Paul says in verses 1-13 to…

# I. Honour pastors for their humility (1-13).

[Recognise their willingness to humbly serve.]

##  Treat pastors as faithful stewards accountable to God (1-5).

 [See them as servants answering not to your opinion, but to God’s.]

### Paul exhorted the church to view him and the apostles as servants and stewards (1-5).

#### Apostles were *servants* of Christ (4:1a).

##### The word for servant here is not the same as “slave” but instead “an assistant to someone in an official position.” UBS translator’s handbook (Blomberg, 88)

##### So Paul’s saying, “Hey, view me as Christ’s assistant—not the King himself!”

##### Sometimes I’ve heard comments like, “Our pastor is not a very good CEO at all!” It’s easy to forget that *Jesus* is the head of the church—the Christ Executive Officer.

##### On the other hand, some of us view the pastor as the only one in the church with 800 bosses! Remember that Paul says he was a servant of *Christ*, not an employee who follows the whim of each church member.

#### Apostles also were to be faithful *stewards* accountable to Christ (4:1b-5).

##### Verses 1b-2 refer to a “house manager” or what the KJV and NASB call a “steward.” A steward in Paul’s day managed the assets of another. We don’t use this word much now, but the concept sure stays with us. Now we call him an investment banker, for example. He may have the responsibility to manage $10 million in the bond market, but the money isn’t his!

##### But in verse 3 does Paul say he’s not accountable to the Corinthians?

###### No, he’s saying that ultimately the Lord’s opinion counts, not people’s or even our view of ourselves.

###### We often deceive ourselves into thinking we’re really something for God.

###### But our own opinion of ourselves actually counts very little.

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Then one farmer came up with a great idea—to hire a professional jockey to ride his horse. He did and the idea proved a good one, for his horse was far in the lead. Then at the last hurdle the horse stumbled, throwing both horse and rider onto the ground.

Just then the other farmer’s horse came over the hurdle and, surprised at the confusion, also fell down and threw its rider.

But the professional jockey was quicker and, jumping on the horse, ran across the finish line first.

Proud of himself, he was delighted to see the owner running toward him—at least he was delighted until he saw the look on the farmer’s face, livid with anger.

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“Yeh, you won the race,” the farmer steamed, “On the wrong horse!”

You see, it’s not our own opinion of ourselves that matters! It’s what the judge says!

##### So in verse 5 Paul says not to judge before the appointed time. They were trying to judge who was the best leader to follow—Paul, Apollos, or Peter.

(What’s here for us in terms of how we view our spiritual leaders?)

### We need to realise that our pastors ultimately will account to God rather than us.

#### Account for what? Whether they had the largest church? the best music? the most stimulating sermons? No, they’ll be judged whether they’ve been faithful!

#### Faithful to do what?

##### Well, just look at the term itself: “pastor.” It means “shepherd.”

##### I remember hearing one member of a church I attended lament, “I don’t have a pastor,” and I replied, “What do you mean? Our church has two pastors!” Then he said, “I don’t have a pastor—only two men that administer the church!”

#### I believe this church’s pastors are faithful, but I wonder how you’re doing at letting your pastors serve Christ first, and you second.

##### When a pastor has an idea how to better serve the Lord, do you squelch it in word or deed? Sometimes it takes neither—it’s passive squelching!

##### I’m been encouraged by the response to Pastor Ric’s rekindled vision regarding the importance of prayer. The sign-up list of those willing to pray for an hour weekly as Prayer Watchmen has yielded nearly 150 commitments!

(So Paul says that we need to treat pastors as faithful stewards accountable to God. Related to this is the exhortation in verses 6-7 to…)

## Evaluate pastors by scriptural standards—not worldly ones (6-7).

[Judge them by God’s leadership criteria, not popular opinion.]

### Let’s not go beyond biblical requirements for leadership selection (4:6a).

#### The phrase “what is written” generally refers to Scripture, so Paul warns us to assess leaders biblically rather than through our own personal lenses and biases.

#### And where are these requirements? 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

##### These texts require us to test a man’s character to see if he is a faithful steward.

##### Not once do these texts refer to charisma—it’s Character First! Not ability but faithfulness!

#### Sometimes I wonder if even Paul would have been accepted as pastor of most churches today. I can just see the Pastoral Search Committee interviewing him:

##### “OK, do you have a prison record?” (“Well, yes, four times”)

##### “Oh, yes, I hear that generally there is a riot when you come into town. Well, then, please explain where you attended seminary” (“Uhh, no seminary—but I was trained by Gamaliel, one of the top rabbis in the Roman Empire.”)

##### “What?” the committee responds, “That legalist?”

##### “OK… I see that you have been in ministry over 30 years, but what’s the longest you served a single church?” (“I stayed in Ephesus once for over two years.”) “Huh? In 30 years this was your longest ministry?!”

(Do you see how we easy it is to have a haughty spirit when we stray from biblical criteria for leaders? There’s a wonderful result of using biblical guidelines…)

### Being biblical will protect the church from pride shown in comparing leaders (4:6b-7).

#### I once became proud from making a worldly choice in a Christian leader.

##### He was experienced overseas, promoted himself well, completed our entire application process in three days, was a PhD candidate, made high dollar salaries—so I advocated paying him well in our Christian organization.

##### Yet within months I saw that not using God’s criteria was disastrous. We just barely averted him taking us to court! And I was humbled!

#### The next leader I helped select was opposite—a more biblical choice!

##### This man was not as outwardly impressive and not as experienced, yet faithful to his wife for 30 years, not concerned about pay so much, a genuine heart.

##### Guess which one made the better leader?!

(So we should see pastors as faithful stewards and do so through biblical criteria. How else should we treat our pastors? Verses 8-13 say to…)

## Recognize your pastors’ humble sacrifices to lead you (8-13).

[Appreciate their selfless suffering on your behalf.]

### [Paul uses sarcasm here to show how the Corinthians exalted themselves] (4:8).

#### Ahhh, yes. Biblical sarcasm! But why?

#### He humbled himself to show how much the church exalted themselves.

### In contrast, Paul humbled himself with the apostles who suffered for Christ (4:9-13).

#### What’s the background to Paul being last in the procession? In NT times, the conquering Roman army would parade through Rome to the cheers of the crowds. The victorious general rode out in front on horseback, followed by his soldiers, and last of all by the vanquished foes. These prisoners were not killed on the battlefield so they would be killed in the Roman arena for the amusement of the audience.

#### Paul says the apostles are like these condemned, weak, humble prisoners but the Corinthians are the honored, strong, victorious kings.

### I wonder how much we really appreciate our pastors’ humble sacrifices to lead us.

#### Some men before becoming pastors had twice the pay and half the complaints.

#### It’s well known that we will pay twice as much to have someone care for our bodies than we will for our souls—yet which matters most in light of eternity?

#### I have served in many types of Christian professions—musician, missionary, discipler, chaplain, church international student consultant, now Bible college lecturer—yet being a pastor was by far the most difficult ministry with the most suffering involved.

#### This month’s newsletter from Dr. James Dobson notes… [read p. 2 paragraph]

#### How are you doing at showing your appreciation for your pastors’ sacrifices? Or are you like the Corinthians who simply expect it?

(So up to verse 13 Paul has encouraged us to honour pastors for their humility. This means recognise your pastors’ faithful service, evaluate them by biblical criteria rather than your biases, and appreciate their sacrifices for Christ and us. Now let’s see the flip side. Good spiritual leaders are humble, yet still you must…)

# II. Respond to your pastors’ spiritual authority (14-21).

#  [Correct your behaviour based on your leaders’ fatherly guidance in three ways.]

## First, fathers admonish (4:14-15).

### Many people have input into my kids’ lives, but it’s mostly my job to warn them.

### Like the proverb, “Better are wounds from a friend than kisses from an enemy.”

## Fathers also set an example of godliness (4:16-17).

### Paul exhorted them to follow his example (4:16).

#### "General Eisenhower used to demonstrate the art of leadership with a piece of string. He'd put it on the table and say: pull it and it'll follow you wherever you wish. Push it and it will go nowhere at all. It's just that way when it comes to leading people. They need to follow a person who is leading by example." (LEADERSHIP example)

#### How many of us would say “follow my example”?

### Paul was a sermon walking—and when he couldn’t walk there personally, he sent Timothy to remind them of his godly lifestyle (4:17).

## Fathers not only admonish and set examples, but also discipline stubborn kids (4:18-21).

### Child discipline went out of style in the 1960s in America—and now the USA is reaping the consequences! In response to the permissiveness of the age, a Christian psychologist named Dr. James Dobson wrote his book *Dare to Discipline.*

### Paul also dared to discipline. He didn’t fear using his authority—in love!

### Friends, we must respond to our spiritual leaders who correct us.

#### People don’t like correcting-type of sermons! We want affirmation sermons all the time! Sure, both are needed, but I think we hear too little about correction.

#### Church discipline is little practiced here in Singapore—it’s rare in America too.

##### I have lived in Singapore nearly eight years and yet I have not yet heard of a single case in which the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 were followed.

##### Why? Is it because the Singapore Church is such a holy church that discipline is not necessary? Or could it be because we have become too lax in expecting Christians to act like Christians? Or do we not submit to our pastors when they want to lead us to discipline others with the goal of restoration?

(So what’s Paul really saying in this chapter? I think it’s this…)

# Conclusion

### Treat pastors with a biblical balance—as faithful and humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers with authority (M.I.).

### Respect your pastors for their humility balanced with spiritual leadership (MI restated).

### Recognising the spiritual authority of pastors is especially needed in Baptist churches which emphasize congregational authority. It’s also noted in two other key texts:

#### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, “Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.”

#### Hebrews 13:17 reminds us, “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

### Dobson’s newsletter gives four suggestions on how to treat spiritual leaders [read p. 3 suggestions].

 **Preliminary Questions**

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

1 What does the “So then” refer back to and conclude? Paul has just told the believers in chapter 3 that one way to prevent divisions is to see all blessings as ultimately from God—not from our leaders. Now he begins to address just who these leaders really are—servants.

 How were Paul and the apostles being regarded if not as servants of Christ? The church thought of them as competing leaders each on an ego trip.

 What secret things of God were entrusted to the apostles?

3 Does Paul mean he’s not accountable to the Corinthians? No, he’s saying that ultimately the Lord’s opinion counts, not people’s or even our view of ourselves.

5 What is the church judging to motivate Paul to say not to judge before the appointed time? They were trying to judge who was the best leader to follow—Paul, Apollos, or Peter.

6 What is the source of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written”? Rabbis (NIVSB)?

 How does this saying relate to the context of favoring certain leaders? We need to assess leaders biblically rather than through our own personal lenses and biases.

8 Is Paul being sarcastic? Why? He’s sarcastically trying to get the church to see that the pride they seek shouldn’t be sought after all!

9 What’s the background to Paul being last in the procession? In NT times, the conquering Roman army would parade through Rome to the cheers of the crowds. The victorious general would ride out in front on horseback, followed by his soldiers, and last of all by the vanquished foes. These prisoners were not killed on the battlefield so they would be killed in the Roman arena for the amusement of the audience. Paul says that the apostles are like these condemned, weak, humble prisoners but the Corinthians like the honored, strong, victorious kings.

9-13 Why is Paul complaining about being mistreated as an apostle?

14-15 Is Paul rallying for support? Doesn’t this contradict what he said earlier about favorite teachers?

18 Who are these people opposing Paul?

21 What is Paul threatening to do to his opposers at Corinth?

**Possible Illustrations**

### That Christ gave us the Lord’s Supper shows just how fantastic a leader Jesus was.

Supper

#### Every leader has the task to remind his people of the basics.

#### Jesus knew that we would easily forget his death, so, like a good leader, he had his death pictured in both baptism and the Lord’s table.

##### Being “buried with him into his death” in baptism symbolizes through water that Christ’s death cleanses us from sin.

##### Also, in the Supper, both bread and cup depict his body and blood—a price he paid for us that we could otherwise easily forget.

#### No question about it. Christ was the best leader the world has ever had!

Pastors at Risk

“Our pastor is not a very good CEO at all!”

Christ Chapel custodian Francisco: “I don’t have a pastor—only men that administer the church!”

Paul would never have been accepted as pastor of most churches today (prison record, no seminary degree but trained by the top legalist, etc.)

Worldly choice of Dean Kern (experienced overseas, promoted self well, punctual application, PhD cand., high dollar) vs. biblical choice of Mickey Cox (outwardly unimpressive and inexperienced, yet faithful to wife for 30 years, not concerned about pay so much, genuine heart)

Japanese and Koreans view their pastors with incredible admiration and exaltation.

Faithful (v. 2) servants (v. 1) is God’s goal for us as stewards of His assets. This is the key concept of SBC’s mission statement: The mission of Singapore Bible College is to train faithful servants of Jesus Christ for the edification of the church and the urgent evangelisation of the lost.

v. 2 A steward in Paul’s day was someone who managed the assets of another. We don’t use this word much now, but the concept sure stays with us. Now we call him an investment banker, for example. He may have the responsibility to manage $10 million in the bond market, but the money isn’t his!

vv. 3-4 One’s own opinion of himself counts very little (farmer’s jockey on the wrong horse)

"General Eisenhower used to demonstrate the art of leadership with a piece of string. He'd put it on the table and say: pull it and it'll follow you wherever you wish. Push it and it will go nowhere at all. It's just that way when it comes to leading people. They need to follow a person who is leading by example" (LEADERSHIP example important).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reporters and city officials gathered at a Chicago railroad station one afternoon in 1953. The person they were meeting was the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner. A few minutes after the train came to a stop, a giant of a man - six feet four inches—with bushy hair and a large mustache stepped from the train. Cameras flashed.

City officials approached him with hands outstretched. Various people began telling him how honored they were to meet him. The man politely thanked them and then, looking over their heads, asked if he could be excused for a moment. He quickly walked through the crowd until he reached the side of an elderly black woman who was struggling with two large suitcases. He picked up the bags and with a smile, escorted the woman to a bus. After helping her aboard, he wished her a safe journey.

As he returned to the greeting party he apologized, "Sorry to have kept you waiting." The man was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the famous missionary doctor who had spent his life helping the poor in Africa. In response to Schweitzer's action, one member of the reception committee said with great admiration to the reporter standing next to him, "That's the first time I ever saw a sermon walking.”

#### [Albert Schweitzer also led by example.]

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**Used at Mt. Carmel but Not GBC**

### The mother spoke to the seemingly lifeless form under the bed covers, “Get up! C’mon, time for church…”

#### “Aww, I don’t want to go to church,” came the reply, “And I’ll give you two reasons. One, those people don’t like me; and two, I don’t like them either!”

#### “Well,” the mother was quick to add, “I’ll give you two reasons that you need to go to church. One, you’re 42 years old! And two, you’re the pastor of the church!”

### When I first heard this account I laughed. Then I became a pastor myself and realized all too painfully some of the struggles with how people perceive pastors and vice versa.

### In the church we struggle with how to view our leaders—particularly our pastors.

**Conclusion**

### What do you really expect out of your pastors?

#### Big budgets? Counting conversions and baptisms? More programs? To be CEO?

#### Or do you expect pastors to show faithfulness to the Lord and to their task of shepherding the flock?

### It’s time for sheep to appreciate shepherds.

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

The way to church unity is to treat Christian leaders properly (Blomberg, 43)

The right way to treat leaders is to consider them faithful servants (1-5), to be judged by Scripture (6-7), unjustly suffering (8-13), even though specially related (14-21). Blomberg, 88

The characteristics of a true spiritual father are humility, concern, example, and discipline of carnality.

The reason for church divisions is because of pride rather than imitating leaders’ abasement.

Stuck-up Christians need stuck-down leaders.

The way to respond to people who think little of you is to be mature towards them.

The way to deal with carnal (divisive) believers is to model the characteristics of maturity.

The way to nurture immature believers is to model maturity. (Not really, for Paul is not saying “Be like me” as much as he is saying “Treat me this way”).

**How to Treat Your Pastors**

***1 Corinthians 4***

**Exegetical Outline**

The right way to treat leaders is to consider them faithful servants (1-5), to be judged by Scripture (6-7), unjustly suffering (8-13), even though specially related (14-21). Blomberg, 88

***Exegetical Idea:* The way Paul asked the Corinthians to treat him and the apostles was biblically as faithful, humble servants yet with a fatherly concern.**

# I. The way the church should treat Paul and the apostles was as faithful servants accountable to Christ’s judgment rather than human opinion (4:1-5).

## Apostles were *servants* of Christ (4:1a).

## Apostles were to be faithful *stewards* accountable to Christ (4:1b-5).

# II. The way the church should treat Paul and the apostles was according to biblical standards rather than pridefully comparing them (4:6-7).

## The church should not go beyond scriptural requirements for leadership selection (4:6a).

## Being biblical will protect the church from pride shown in comparing leaders (4:6b-7).

# III. The way the church should treat Paul and the apostles was as humble men who suffered to lead the church (4:8-13).

## The church exalted itself for its wealth (4:8).

## Paul humbled himself with the apostles who suffered for Christ (4:9-13).

# IV. The way the church should treat Paul was as a mature spiritual father who cared enough for them to discipline them (4:14-21).

## Paul modeled maturity by admonishing them like a father (4:14-15).

### His purpose in writing was to warn them towards repentance rather than shame them so that they would lose face (4:14).

### His concern as their spiritual father went far beyond the concern of one who merely followed up on his church planting efforts (4:15).

## Paul modeled maturity by setting an example of godliness for them (4:16-17).

### He exhorted them to follow his example (4:16).

### He sent Timothy to remind them of his godly lifestyle (4:17).

## Paul modeled maturity by his willingness to discipline unrepentant believers there (4:18-21).

### Some Corinthians thought Paul only threatened without action (4:18)

### Paul promised to visit Corinth to discern if his opponents were genuinely spiritual or only talked that way (4:19-20).

### The way the church would respond to Timothy would decide whether Paul’s visit would be to discipline the unrepentant or reaffirm the repentant (4:21).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Everyone is talking about the economic crisis, aren’t they?

### Yet it seems to me that more basic than the economic crisis is a leadership crisis worldwide.

### In the church we also struggle with how to view our leaders—particularly our pastors.

### Subject: So how should we treat our spiritual leaders—especially our pastors? What is a biblical perspective of their role?

### Let me say that no one put me up to this!

### Paul addressed the issues of leadership in the first few chapters of 1 Corinthians.

### So how should we treat our pastors? Paul first says to…

# I. Honor pastors for their humility (1-13).

## Treat pastors as faithful stewards accountable to God (1-5).

### Paul

### Us

## Evaluate pastors by scriptural standards—not worldly ones (6-7).

### The church should not go beyond scriptural requirements for leadership selection (4:6a).

### Being biblical will protect the church from pride shown in comparing leaders (4:6b-7).

## Recognize your pastors’ humble sacrifices to lead you (8-13).

### Paul

### Us

# II. Respond to your pastors’ fatherly care and example (14-21).

## Paul

## Us

# Conclusion

### Treat pastors with a biblical balance—as humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers (M.I.).

**Introduction**

We all struggle with how to view our church leaders.

Issue: How should we treat our spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ —especially our pastors? What is a biblical view of their role?

**I. Honour pastors for their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-13).**

A. Treat pastors as faithful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ accountable to God (1-5).

B. Evaluate pastors by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ standards —not worldly ones (6-7).

C. Recognise your pastors’ humble \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to lead you (8-13).

**II. Respond to your pastors’ spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (14-21).**

1. Fathers admonish (14-15).

2. Fathers set an example of godliness (16-17).

3. Fathers discipline stubborn kids (18-21).

**Conclusion**

Treat pastors with a biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ — as humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers (Main Idea).

Here’s my original EO & HO before consulting Blomberg and rethinking it...

**Will the Mature Leader Sit Down?**

**How to Treat Your Pastors**

**How’s Your View?**

***1 Corinthians 4***

**Exegetical Outline**

The right way to treat leaders is to consider them faithful servants (1-5), to be judged by Scripture (6-7), unjustly suffering (8-13), even though specially related (14-21). Blomberg, 88

***Exegetical Idea:* The way Paul nurtured the immature (proud and divisive) Corinthian believers was to model the characteristics of maturity.**

# I. The way Paul modeled maturity for the immature Corinthians was to be a faithful servant accountable to Christ’s judgment rather than human opinion (4:1-7).

## Apostles were *servants* of Christ (4:1a).

## Apostles were to be faithful *stewards* accountable Christ (4:1b-4).

## The church should evaluate apostles biblically rather than comparing them as if they knew their motives (4:5-7).

# II. The way Paul modeled maturity for the immature Corinthians was to humble himself to shame their pride (4:8-13).

## The church exalted itself for its wealth (4:8).

## Paul humbled himself with the apostles who suffered for Christ (4:9-13).

# III. The way Paul modeled maturity for the immature Corinthians was to admonish them like a father (4:14-15).

## His purpose in writing was to warn them towards repentance rather than shame them so that they would lose face (4:14).

## His concern as their spiritual father went far beyond the concern of one who merely followed up on his church planting efforts (4:15).

# IV. The way Paul modeled maturity for the immature Corinthians was to set an example of godliness for them (4:16-17).

## He exhorted them to follow his example (4:16).

## He sent Timothy to remind them of his godly lifestyle (4:17).

# V. The way Paul modeled maturity for the immature Corinthians was to discipline unrepentant believers there (4:18-21).

## Some Corinthians thought Paul only threatened without action (4:18)

## Paul promised to visit Corinth to discern if his opponents were genuinely spiritual or only talked that way (4:19-20).

## The way the church would respond to Timothy would decide whether Paul’s visit would be to discipline the unrepentant or reaffirm the repentant (4:21).

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### How do you respond when people are jerks toward you?

#### Some of us ignore them.

#### Sometimes we show jerky behaviour ourselves.

### Main Idea: How can we nurture immature believers? By modeling maturity ourselves!

### DQ #1 (Explain): But what are the characteristics of maturity? How would you know if you’re a mature believer or not?

Used only at Mt. Carmel

# Introduction

### The mother spoke to the form under the covers, “Get up! C’mon, time for church…”

### Everyone is talking about the economic crisis, aren’t they?

#### I know this is a real concern, shown in the repossession of several large cars which people can’t afford here now.

#### I see many empty private housing flats—I hear it’s a renter’s market with prices having fallen.

#### Perhaps the economy is a real concern for you this morning.

### Yet it seems to me that more basic than the economic crisis is a leadership crisis worldwide.

#### I’m no political analyst, but maybe the Indonesian crisis, at its core, stemmed from people’s ideas whether they felt President Suharto led the nation effectively. First leadership, then economy.

#### Our problems with feeding famine-stricken countries is also often leadership related. It’s not that there’s not enough food to feed the world—in Somalia and other places when food has been provided, the leaders have prevented getting it to the people. Some leaders felt it better that they die of starvation, others took that money or food and exchanged it for weapons!

#### America also is in a leadership crisis with the many accusations against President Clinton—and now he will have to testify concerning his bedroom habits. What’s his role, really? A poll last week revealed that 65% of Americans feel his sexual morality is irrelevant—what matters is how he leads the country. Others say that integrity must apply to his personal as well as public life.

#### Yes, we definitely have a worldwide leadership crisis today.

Not Used at all:

### Paul also dared to discipline. He didn’t fear using his authority—in love!

#### Some Corinthians thought Paul only threatened without action (4:18)

#### Paul promised to visit Corinth to see if his opponents were genuinely spiritual or only talked that way (4:19-20).

#### How the church responded would decide how Paul had to act (4:21).

##### Would Paul’s visit be to discipline the unrepentant (4:21a)?

Or would Paul visit to reaffirm the repentant (4:21b)?

Rick Griffith

1 April 2007



How’s Your View?

*1 Corinthians 4*

# Introduction

How should we view our spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_–– especially our elders?

What is a biblical view of their role?

# I. Honor your leaders for their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1-13).

## Treat spiritual shepherds as faithful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ accountable to God (1-5).

## Evaluate elders by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ standards —not worldly ones (6-7).

## Recognize your leaders’ humble \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to lead you (8-13).

# II. Respond to your elders’ spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (14-21).

## Fathers admonish (14-15).

## Fathers set an example of godliness (16-17).

## Fathers discipline stubborn kids (18-21).

# Conclusion

### Treat elders with a biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ — as humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers (Main Idea).

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

### Hebrews 13:17

 **Rick Griffith**

 7 October 2012

 *Message 5 of 24 in “Becoming Who We Are” 1 Corinthians Series*

**How’s Your View?**

***1 Corinthians 4***

# Introduction

How should we view our spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ leaders –– especially our elders?

What is a biblical view of their role?

# I. Honor your leaders for their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ humility (1-13).

## Treat spiritual shepherds as faithful \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ servants accountable to God (1-5).

## Evaluate elders by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ biblical standards—not worldly ones (6-7).

## Recognize your leaders’ humble \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sacrifices to lead you (8-13).

# II. Respond to your elders’ spiritual \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ authority (14-21).

## Fathers admonish (14-15).

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## Fathers discipline stubborn kids (18-21).

# Conclusion

### Treat elders with a biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_balance— as humble servants, yet also as spiritual fathers (Main Idea).

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

### Hebrews 13:17

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 4 aloud. Contrast how most people view leaders today with Paul says how to do it in the church:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Worldly View of Leadership** | **God’s View of Leadership** |
| Leader (6) | Servant of God (1a) |
| Taking care of human concerns (3) | Stewards of mysteries of God (1b) |
| Evaluated by men (5) | Evaluated by God (4) |
| Compared to others (7) | Compared to what God expects (4b) |
| Integrity doesn't matter | Private life very important (5) |
| Exalted (8) | Despised, weak & ridiculed (9) |
| Well provided for | Lacks necessities (11) |
| Wise & powerful (10) | Hard working (12) |
| Demands respect | Gracious towards revilers (12b-13) |
| Oratory skills (19a, 20a) | The Power of God (19b, 20b) |
| Manages like a CEO | Cares like a father (14-16) |
| Authority demanded | Authority earned (15) |
| Is his own boss | Follows Christ (17) |
| No right to judge people’s private lives | Right to discipline subordinates (21) |

1. Review the three responsibilities of fathers––both physical and spiritual fathers (4:14-21). Where have you seen these roles in your own experience?

Lewis and I admonished the CIC members in 2010

I admonished our preschooler sons to behave in church or get spanked

1. How has this look at 1 Corinthians 4 changed your view of Christian leadership?

Spiritual leadership is a sacrificial role

Spiritual leaders are accountable to God

Spiritual leaders must be examples to the flock

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 4 aloud. Contrast:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Issue** | **Contrast** |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |
| Text | Text |

1. Text-based question

Text

Text

Text

Text

1. Application to your own Christian experience?

Text

Text