

The Problem of Pride

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I. Judicious judging. (1 Corinthians 4)

A. Personal example of a boy who never obeyed his mother's requests.

1. Discerning whether it was appropriate to address the situation was difficult.

2. The Apostle Paul deals with something similar. He advises:

a. 1 Corinthians 4—Judge nothing before the Lord comes.

b. 1 Corinthians 5—Judge everything.

II. Chapter 4:1-13: Judging is wrong.

A. Our inability to judge ourselves prevents us from judging others.

B. Paul sees himself as nothing more than a steward.

1. The mark of a steward is obedience to the master.

2. It is blasphemous when we impugn stewards of God because we tell God he has made a crumby choice when he chose him or her.

C. The example of Billy Graham.

1. Graham never takes time to answer his critics; he controls himself and does not return judgment.

2. It is too easy to judge from the sight of the eyes.

D. Paul says never to judge too early. He makes the judgment of man a small thing.

1. Men's judgment is fraught with error.

2. Paul does not even judge himself because he says he knows nothing by himself.

a. Socrates says to judge oneself.

b. Paul, on the other hand, says that he cannot know himself.

1) It is difficult to determine our motives.

2) Romans 7—Paul does not know why he does what he does.

c. Not knowing himself does not, however, excuse him.

3. If you cannot judge your own motives, how can you judge others' motives.
 - a. God will judge us by the secret intents of the heart.
 - b. There are so many areas that he could find fault with us that he could have a 'field day.'
4. "every man will have the praise of God;" not condemnation, but commendation.
 - a. By a miracle, God does not fault us.
 - b. This is the miracle of grace, which is based on the cross of Jesus Christ.
5. Verses 5-6: the reason that people are puffed up and proud is that people do not understand their own natures.
 - a. It is easy to feel good about oneself compared to some other guy.
 - b. We ought to assess ourselves compared to where we ought to be.
 - c. We are not supposed to compare ourselves to other people.
 - d. Never pray, 'God, give me what I deserve.'
6. Everything that we are and have has been given to us by God.
 - a. You will never be able to properly appreciate the grace of God until you answer the questions that Paul does about his nature.
7. Verse 8: making comparisons with others is totally irrelevant and immaterial. It matters only what God thinks. The higher a man thinks of himself, the more he is to be pitied.
 - a. Are you willing to make others look good at your own expense?
 - b. Are you gladly eager to concede your own inferiorities?
 - c. Is it difficult to admit that you are wrong?
 - 1) Communal sin is easy to admit.
 - 2) Personal sin is harder to take responsibility for.

III. Chapter 4:14-21: Judging by what authority?

A. Two types of authority.

1. Worldly subjective authority rooted in self.
2. Spiritual objective authority rooted in God.

B. The Corinthians had an arrogant attitude towards Paul. (Verse 18)

1. When compared to others, we look pretty good.
 - a. The typical person today sets himself up as a final court of appeal.

C. The possible coming of Paul. (Verse 19)

1. When he comes, he will come in the power of the Spirit.
2. He gives them a choice; he will come with the rod or with love and meekness.

D. Paul's authority is God's authority because he speaks God's word.

1. God has ordained spiritual leaders to whom we are responsible.
 - a. God has given us spiritual leaders to protect us from ourselves.
 - b. We are prone to destruction; therefore, God gave us leaders. We cannot survive by ourselves.
 - 1) This is why God gave us mothers and fathers.
 - 2) The problem is when we grow up we transfer the physical cleaving to a spiritual understanding; we will always need spiritual mothers and fathers.
2. If God has given you people that you can be accountable to, it is one of the richest blessings you can receive.

IV. Chapter 5:1-13: Judging is necessary.

A. An absolute standard necessitates absolute judging.

1. The report of fornication.
 - a. This is an objective transgression of the absolute moral commandment of God.
 - b. In this instance we can judge because our authority is not the subjective feelings of man, but the objective Word of God.
 - c. Paul calls the Corinthians arrogant for not judging the transgressor in the community.
 - d. The difficulty of the deliverance of the transgressor to Satan.
 - 1) The man must have voluntarily submitted himself to the authority of the believing community.
 - 2) People refuse today to submit themselves to the authority of spiritual leadership.

2. We do not ‘take the beam out of our own eye’ first, when there are issues that we have responsibility to judge in.

3. The pastor is usually the main dish over the Sunday meal—that is almost always an area that we have no business judging in.

B. In general, we speak when God speaks, and we are silent where the Word of God is silent.

1. The Bible is clear what we are to judge in.

2. There are some who label sin to be sin when they have no business labeling it as such.

3. Judging needs to be in perspective. Sin needs to be sin. Tolerance needs to be given to the person who disagrees. We need to give room to those areas where we can hardly judge ourselves.

V. Application.

A. Do not judge other people.

B. Submit to God’s authority.

C. Judge sin with decisiveness.

Application questions:

1. There seems to be an immediate contradiction in the exhortations of Paul in the passages that were visited. How does the speaker address this apparent conflict?

2. In what ways do you find yourself judging in areas that you may not have any business judging in? Why is it not your business? What does the Scriptures say about this?

3. Why is it our responsibility to judge sin? Why might being passive when we encounter sin be sin itself? What steps can you take to be more active in judging sin, yet gentle and loving in your approach?
