**I Corinthians 4:1-8**

***The Makings Of A Servant***

Introduction

1. We aren’t ‘stars’, we are servants. Are you a servant?

2. I Corinthians 4:1-8 To make a point Paul, Apollos were elevated above all others and given

 a ‘star status’. *We’re servants*…servants should never receive ‘star status’!

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**I. THE AUTHORITY OF A SERVANT 4:1, 2**

We are not ‘stars’.

1. ***Our Position*** *ministers of Christ*
2. The word *ministers* is servants. The word differs from the Greek word in (3:5) which is *diakonai* and stresses subordination and responsibility to a superior. Here *huperetas* originally these were under rowers in an ancient galley having 3 banks of oars. These were the lowest galley slaves, the one rowing in the bottom tier of the ship.
3. So we are servants of Christ acting under His direction, doing what we are told without hesitation, getting to know His will, keeping in daily contact with Him, always reporting back to Him. **It’s a team effort (we are one of many rowers).**
4. ***Our Placement*** *stewards of the mysteries of God*
5. We are *stewards* not ‘stars’. This person managed, administered the household or estate of his Master. Any status he had stemmed from the One he represented. He had no authority, no possessions of his own. **We only serve His interests!**
6. *Of the mysteries of God* A *mystery* are those things previously hidden but now revealed. Paul was a *steward* dispensing truth to others. Paul was the revealer of New Testament truth who's ultimate source was *God.* He is the Author and originator of what he wrote.
7. ***Our Practice 2***
8. The prime requisite of a servant, steward is faithfulness, fidelity, trustworthiness and loyalty.
9. *To God* He is the One who has placed us in this position. **Faithfulness: To God**

**To the people of God…**this is God’s household, and God’s household needs to be fed. **To the Truth of God…**the whole counsel of God must be presented and defended. **To His Commission…**we are to go and make disciples and teach them, so they can go and make disciples and teach them.

1. What God thinks of us is more important than what we think of ourselves.

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**II. THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF A SERVANT 4:3-5**

Every responsibility demands accountability and accountability requires evaluation.

1. ***Examination 3, 4***
2. Paul faced a situation which faces all true servants of God. He was scrutinized, examined and judged by others. **It can get you down!**
3. There are three judgments: *By others…By yourself…By the Lord*

\**By Others:* their examination mattered little to him. They were incompetent. No one knows all the facts. Man is imperfect. Even compliments, though appreciated, are still just the opinion of man.

\**By Ourselves I judge not myself…*that examination of (I Cor. 11:28; II Cor. 13:5) is necessary and needed. All of us are naturally inclined to build ourselves up and we are hurt if others don’t see our worth and value. Some are prone to negativism. We can’t trust our own evaluation. **Star status is manmade!**

\**By the Lord For I know nothing against myself…*he is not speaking of his personal life. We all have short comings and holes. In discharging responsibility, he was not aware of any failure in carrying out his task. He had no serious sin or defect. He knew he could be wrong even in that assessment.

*Yet I am not by this acquitted…*his own evaluation favorable or unfavorable isn’t what really mattered.

*The one who examines me is the Lord…my examiner is the Lord…*the only evaluation that makes any difference is the Lord’s. There is no article before *Lord. My judge is Lord…*He alone is omniscient and has the necessary insight to be adequate for the task.

1. ***Exoneration 5*** There is coming a *time.*

*Therefore…*don’t make ‘star status’ out of servants.

1. *Judge nothing before the time.* He isn’t saying to not call sin…sin. He is saying that all judgment is faulty, inconclusive and incomplete. All human verdicts are prejudiced.
2. *Then the Lord will bring into the light the hidden things…*He will disclose the motives of men’s hearts. These are the things that only God can see. Evaluation will be by Him in His time. In passing judgment, we see only the exterior, the outside, the visible and we cannot know what is hidden. *Things hidden in the darkness* may not be sin, but merely things presently unknown to us.
3. *Then every man shall have the praise of God…*Every believer will have some *gold, silver, and precious stones.* We will receive praise from God for each that stands the test. **This is the only praise that really matters…*well done thou good and faithful servant.*** Someone does see. Someone does know. Someone does care. **One day we will hear it!**

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**III. THE ATTITUDE OF A SERVANT 4:6-8**

1. ***The Danger 6*** Humility does not permit ‘stars’. Paul and Apollos serve as examples.
2. *Who do not go beyond what is written…*live within the Word. Conform to God’s Word. *What is written…*it is often used of the Old Testament introducing a quotation. There is no quotation here, so Paul is probably drawing attention to Scripture that exalts God rather than the servant.
3. *That no one of you be puffed up one against the other…Puffed up* is pride and is always a danger among *servants.* In means, inflated, blown up, so he is speaking of an inflated view of one’s self and importance.
4. ***The Designer*** ***7*** These three questions leave no room for pride…no room for ‘star status’.

Why do we brag?

1. *Who maketh thee to differ? Who sees anything different in you? Who regards you as superior?* We have different gifts…different intellect and different abilities. We are all made of the same stuff!
2. *What do you have that you did not receive?* God gave it to you. What does anyone have that they did not receive in one way or another? Let’s name a few: life, food, care, shelter, education, talents, the country into which you were born, your IQ, the opportunity to make a living.
3. *But if you received it, why glory?* Why do you boast as if you did not receive it? If they possessed only what someone else has given them…why were they boasting as if they had created it themselves or earned it themselves. It’s all pride. It is easy to take credit for something that isn’t ours.
4. ***The Denial 8***
5. Paul is being sarcastic. They thought they were something and had everything. They were nobody and had nothing.
6. They were fooling themselves. It happens with ‘star status’. *Without us you have become kings! Would that you did reign, so that we might share the rule with you!*
7. They are like the church at Laodica in (Rev. 3:17ff)  *it was increased with goods and had need of nothing, but they were naked, poor and blind!*
8. How wonderful Paul says, if it were true. They had it all. They had arrived. The truth is they weren’t *full, rich, or reigning.*

***Star Status***

**God calls for us to be servants: we are never rich until we’re poor.**

**We are never full until we’re empty.**

**We are never reigning until we serve.**

**THE WAY UP IS DOWN!**