

Sunday, May 8, 2016—I Corinthians 4:14-17: Be Ye Followers of Me

I Corinthians 1:14

- **I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.**
- After speaking quit harshly to the Corinthians in verses 6-13, Paul tells them in verse 14 that he is not writing these things to shame them. According to Webster's 1828 Dictionary, the English word "shame" carries various meanings as both a noun and a verb.
 - (Noun) A painful sensation excited by a consciousness of guilt, or of having done something which injures reputation; or by of that which nature or modesty prompts us to conceal. *Shame* is particularly excited by the disclosure of actions which, in the view of men, are mean and degrading. Hence it it is often or always manifested by a downcast look or by blushes, called *confusion of face*.
 - (Verb) To make ashamed; to excite a consciousness of guilt or of doing something derogatory to reputation; to cause to blush.
 - I Cor. 4:14
- The reason that Paul is writing the Corinthians is not to shame them for the sake of shaming them. The very fact that Paul says this indicates that he did not want the Corinthians to miss the point of his rebuke.
- Rather as Paul's "beloved sons" he was warning them. The expression "beloved sons" is a term of endearment used by Paul at least 26 different times throughout his epistles in various forms. A form of this expression is used in the gospels to refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - Matthew 3:17
 - Romans 1:7
 - Romans 16:5
 - I Corinthians 10:14—6 times a form of this expression is used in I & II Corinthians to refer to the Corinthians.
- As "beloved sons" it was necessary that Paul "warn" the Corinthians. To "warn" means to give notice of approaching or probable danger or evil, that it may be avoided; to caution against any thing that may prove injurious. (*Webster's 1828*) The Greek word translated "warn" in verse 14 is elsewhere translated "admonish" in Paul's epistles.
 - Colossians 1:28

- Colossians 3:16
- I Thessalonians 5:12, 14
- I Corinthians 4:14—so Paul is not writing unto his “beloved sons” not for the purpose of shaming them but to “warn” them. When ones children need correction a good father does not seek to shame his children but rather to warn them of impending danger or the potential consequences of their decisions.

I Corinthians 4:15

- **For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.***
- *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ*—did the Corinthians really have ten thousand instructors in Christ? I don’t believe so. Paul is making a point here that the Corinthians were listening to anyone and everyone and that their divisions centering around various teachers was evidence of this fact.
 - I Corinthians 1:11-12
- *yet have ye not many fathers*—“yet” is an English conjunction meaning nevertheless, notwithstanding, moreover, beside, or over and above. Despite the fact that the Corinthians were listening to a multiplicity of teachers they did not have many fathers in the faith.
- *for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel*—Paul was their father in that they were begotten of the gospel through Paul’s ministry among them. It was on account of Paul’s labor in the gospel of Christ that the Corinthians were saved.
 - Titus 1:14
 - Philemon 1:10-12
- The Corinthians were behaving like wayward teenagers who were ashamed of their own parents but were taking instruction from anyone and everyone.
- As your pastor, I would just like to caution the saints of this assembly regarding who they allowing to be their instructors in Christ. Christendom has much to offer that may look good on the surface but will only serve to confuse you.

I Corinthians 4:16

- **Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.**

- *Wherefore I beseech you*—on the basis of the fact that “I have begotten you through the gospel” in verse 15, I beseech you. According to *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary* the English word “beseech” means “to entreat; to supplicate; to implore; to ask or pray with urgency.” Notice that this word does not mean to order or command. To beseech is to ask according to grace.
 - Romans 12:1-2
 - Ephesians 4:1
- *be ye followers of me*—on the basis of the fact Paul had “begotten” the Corinthians through he gospel in verse 15 he beseeches them in verse 16 to be followers of him. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul wanted the Corinthians to follow the pattern he set because in so doing they would be following Christ.
 - I Corinthians 11:1
 - Philippians 3:17
 - I Thessalonians 1:6
 - II Thessalonians 3:9
- Who are you following in your Christian life? Who’s teaching and theology are you allowing to hold sway over your thoughts, attitudes, and actions? The reason the church at large is in the mess that it is in is because they have refused to recognize Paul’s authority as the apostle of the gentiles during the current dispensation of grace.

I Corinthians 4:17

- **For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**
- *For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus*—it was for the cause of beseeching the Corinthians to be followers of Paul that Timothy was sent unto them.
- *who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord*—Timothy is also Paul’s beloved son in the faith which means that he is in the boat as the Corinthians in that regard.
 - I Timothy 1:2
 - II Timothy 1:2

- Much could be said here about Paul's relationship with Timothy that I will refrain from mentioning for the sake of time. Suffice it to say, that from the time Paul met Timothy in Acts 16 until the time Paul died, Timothy was a faithful fellow laborer with Paul in the work of the ministry.
- *who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ*—Timothy's job in Corinth is going to be to bring them "into remembrance" of Paul's "ways which be in Christ." In order to bring them into "remembrance" implies that they already knew these things and had forgotten them. In running after their ten thousand instructors in verse 15 they had forgotten the very basic things that Paul had taught them.
- This is what happens when saints cease from following Paul. We all need to understand that Satan has a policy of evil against the message of grace and will stop at nothing to move us away from that message. This is what had happened to the Corinthians, they had been moved away from Paul. They did not want to count the cost along with the Apostle Paul.
 - I Corinthians 4:8-13—rather than joining Paul in being the "offscouring of all things" the Corinthians were being moved away from Paul. Timothy was sent unto them to remind them of Paul's ways.
- *as I teach every where in every church*—Paul conducted his business and taught the same doctrine in every church that he established. Here at Grace Life Bible Church we are endeavoring to follow Paul in our doctrine, practice, and organization.