

Paul now winds up this rather lengthy admonishment beginning in chapter 1 regarding their petty divisions and various followings of various leaders and teachers. Their schools of thought were founded upon the wisdom of men instead of solely upon the teaching he had brought them. He was not being possessive of them or seeking a following. They had been saved through the gospel he had brought them. They were his beloved, his children (sons, KJV). He only desired that they devotedly follow his Lord and Savior, and NO ONE ELSE. But he can confidently exhort them to follow him rather than their leaders. Elsewhere he has said "follow me as I follow Christ."

Furthermore, he has sent Timothy with this letter so he can remind them in person of the character and manner of walk they had seen earlier in Paul. They knew Timothy for he had been in Corinth with Paul. He speaks of him as his child too. He was a faithful brother. They were his brothers and sisters in Christ. Would they receive him or put him down as a puppet of Paul?

The Corinthian believers were judging Paul, (verses 1-6) and he has rebuked them for that. But he now goes much further and tells them to follow him. Would any of us have the confidence in our faithfulness and devotion that we would dare invite others to follow us, much less exhort them to? Our consciences ought to be free to do that.

Almost incidentally Paul reminds them that the conduct he is desiring from them is only what he desires from all the churches. They were not unique. We aren't either. What Paul is saying to the Corinthians applies to all believers in what is called "assembly," "church," or "Christian" world wide, since it was written until the Lord returns for us. Many things taken up in the two letters to the Corinthians are ignored or otherwise dismissed by many professing believers today. But the Holy Spirit repeatedly enforces the ongoing applicability of the principles and instructions given in these epistles.

1Corinthians 1:2 ...with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,...

4:17 ...as I teach every where in every church.

7:17 ... so ordain I in all churches.

11:16 ... neither the churches of God.

14:33 ...as in all churches of the saints.

16:1 ...as I have given order to the churches ...

They had leaders all right. Many instructors in Christ but few fathers. They were taken up with this teaching or that teaching but were lacking the nurture a true loving father would bring his children. The teachers were getting followings. But a human father

doesn't normally treat his family as a "following" or seek to dominate his family and wife. "Instructors" is from the Greek word:

**3807 paidagogos**, a *boy-leader*, i.e. a servant whose office it was to take the children to school;- instructor, schoolmaster.

The same is translated "schoolmaster" in Galatians 3:24. We are done with that era. Paul was concerned that they were missing the privileges of loving unity and mutual interdependence that were theirs in Christ. He desires to gently draw them back with a fatherly love. Perhaps that is why the gift of a pastor (shepherd) is linked with that of a teacher in Ephesians 4. One without the other is unbalanced. We need both instruction and loving care (guidance, admonition and protection). Fathers do both. Yet he warns them that he would come with power if they did not heed this epistle to them. The Greek word for power here is:

**1411 dunamis**, *force*; specially miraculous *power* (usually by implication a *miracle* itself) : - ability, abundance, meaning, mightily, mighty, mighty deed), (worker of) miracle (-s), power, strength, violence, might (wonderful) work.

Our English words dynamic, dynamo, dynamite etc. are derived from it. What is Paul warning? Will he use his apostolic power to literally strike down the obstinate leaders with a word? Well, for sure he will not stoop to merely enter into their arguments and reasoning. He won't posture and puff like their carnal leaders who try to blow away their opposition with powerful arguments, bluster or derogatory remarks. The Corinthians have too much of that going already. No, he will speak the word of God to declare a disciplinary action. We will see an example of this in chapter five. Paul isn't around to intervene when we need him now, but we have the inspired scriptures he wrote, so we know what is expected of us and the power to comply.

They were "reigning as kings without him" (v. 8). They were enjoying the worldly, (carnal) luxuries, recognition and privileges of royalty but ignoring the responsibilities of kings to unite, protect, discipline and feed those in their charge. Now they are reminded that the kingdom of God is not a mere playground, sporting event or debating society, but for keeps. There is responsibility, authority and power given by God to those in the kingdom to maintain holiness. Matthew 18:17-18. They are brought face to face with that responsibility in chapter five.

He gives them a choice. What will they choose?