

October 18, 2020
I Corinthians 4:8-21
Marked Up

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

- I. There is a popular saying, “perception is reality.” The problem with this “philosophy” is that it simply is not true. Reality is what God has to say about it. In our passage today Paul tells the Corinthians that though they think they have it all, they really do not. Paul continues by telling them that instead of what they have, his desire is that they would be “imitators of him.” To follow Christ wholeheartedly, then and now, comes with consequences of being persecuted in a wide variety of ways for your allegiance to Jesus. (See **II Timothy 3:12**)
- II. Paul states in **verses 14-15**, that he is the “spiritual father” of the believers there in the Corinthian church. This brings to light a principle that is of great importance in the Christian life. As Christians grow and mature in their spiritual lives they should have people they have won to the Lord and are mentoring. This is especially true in the home. We are commanded to go and make disciples and to teach them. (See **Matthew 28:19-20**) A spiritually mature believer should be able to look back on his/her life and see people they have invested in who following Jesus. Paul had done this in Corinth and in his address to them he implored them, imitate me! By the way, it is never too late to start. Finish your race well!

APPLICATION:

As tough as things were for Paul as he ministered to the believers at Corinth, he never gave up on them. He spent extensive time with them on his first visit, eighteen months to be exact. He would visit them twice more and write at least four letters to them of which we are aware of from Scripture. He did not desire to shame them but he loved them too much NOT to admonish them (**v. 14**) as a parent would their own kids.

Furthermore, as a spiritual father he was ready to go up against anyone who would feed them a diet of unbiblical doctrine. There were many “tutors” among them but he was their spiritual father, they were exhorted to “imitate Paul.” In a continued sense of faithfully guarding his spiritual children he had sent Timothy, one of his “mentees” to them to remind them of his ways (Paul’s) which were in Christ. And, at the end of **verse 17** one reads that his message was the same everywhere he went.

In **verses 18-21** Scripture puts forth a principle that is so valuable for today, sin in the camp must be confronted, do not fear those who would oppose God, He has the power, we can rely on that as we faithfully follow Him and proclaim the gospel. In **verse 21** Paul gives them an option, to comply to God’s Word or expect to have a fight on their hands. Paul could not, would not allow compromise of the clear teaching of the Lord. We must do the same in a world that is more hostile to the kingdom of God now than ever. Pray for the Lord to give you the strength to be imitators of Paul.