1 Corinthians 4 Verse 1

* Paul had just told them how not to think of him as something more than them and now he gives ***two qualifiers*** for how they **should** think about him. ***First as a servant and then as a steward***… Not very impressive. I mean we don’t see folks walking around with t-shirts that say, *“Servant,”* and definitely not *“Steward.”* What do we see? *“Supreme!”* Wouldn’t it have been better if Paul would say to them, *“Think of me as supreme, y’all!”* Much more impressive…
* **In whose eyes?** In the eyes of eternity, in the reality of God? That is not only a lie but its just down right *embarrassing.* And truly, ***to default to “Supreme,” instead of “Servant” is sad.*** Why do I say that? Because if I think myself supreme then what must my walk with God be like…? Sad. There’s more here as well…
* Paul uses the word in the Greek for servant, *“hyperetes.”* Ok, I like that first of all because it has the word ***“hyper”*** in it! **Winner!** HA! But the literal meaning isn’t some ***blind, unappreciated, un-noticed slave*** or something. The meaning of the word is much more than that. It literally means an **under rower.** Ships at that time didn’t have gas motors. And so to *power through waves* or to *gain speed towards a destination*, there would be a team that would sit under the deck of the ship and row together via these oars that would protrude from the sides of a ship.
* And so, the thought is this…God is at the wheel, man. Calling the shots, steering the boat, making ***every perfect calculated decision*** as to direction, **I have no job in steering…my job is to be His muscle.** LOVE IT! (The under rower isn’t even seen) The word literally means, *“anyone who serves with hands.”* Someone that does ***something!*** An *assistant*…Paul says you and I are the same, but when you think of me, here’s the deal, I am the assistant to God Almighty! ***So much better*** than thinking myself or calling myself **“Supreme!”**
* Also, I’m a **steward.** Not a word we use outside of church really. It simply means a *manager.* And so Paul, me, you, Christian…***active assistants to God Most High, managing His business on earth!*** Can there be a better job!? It sounds like the hardest job possible, doesn’t it!? But my brother, my sister, ***this is the only job we are now fully qualified to do!*** Through the work of the Holy Spirit now within you, you are the temple of God, through God within you, this is the job that you are now born for!!! Nothing else, if I try to be anything else, if I’m a Christian…nothing else will fit! *(Jamba Juice gift cards can’t be used at Starbucks! I found that out on Friday!! They are WORTHLESS there…just like I have found my life to truly be, when I am not serving the Lord!)*
* I’ve tried different jobs. Judge, jury, executioner. Prodigal. But where I fit, where I excel…***simply a servant of God and steward of His business.*** But I’ve tried them all. Tried being a lumberjack. Couldn’t hack it. They gave me the ax. HA! Wanted to be a barber. Couldn’t cut it! HA!! Tried working for a muffler factory. Got exhausted! HA! Tried being a historian but there’s just no future there! HA! OK I’m DONE! HA!! This is where we fit and truly there is no higher calling…this is the very pinnacle of supreme on this side of eternity! Paul says, think of me this way…and remember, *we are/ought to be no different!*
* What is this mystery bit? The progressive revelation of what, who, how exactly is God…and oh by the way, the reality of eternity. Just look at John 1:1-4 for a moment…

1 Corinthians Chapter 4 Verse 2

* I believe Paul is setting out on a pattern in this chapter. First, here’s what I ought to be. Well, in truth, here’s **what I am**, where I fit…now, as I faithfully step into this identity and walk in it…

1 Corinthians Chapter 4 Verses 3 – 4

* I’m a ***servant of Christ*** and a ***steward of God’s business.*** That’s who I am, that’s what I do. I have clear direction, clear purpose and through my free will I have set my heart to be found faithful…it that’s your reality, who you’ve become, ***then let the judgment of others come…it will become a very small thing.*** In our generation, this day and age, the judgement of others has become something we almost care **most** about if its positive and what tears us down the **most** if it is critical. Why? I truly believe it is because we no longer serve God, but rather we serve ourselves.
* SO much aggression, so much demand for people to not judge (Link at Guitar Center story)…and for folks to not be judged and on an on…and listen, I’m not saying that folks ought to just be jerks and that’s ok…I’m saying that if you serve the Lord, are about His business…these are the things that are important and primary to you…I’m saying that when they are jerks…***that doesn’t trigger you to be a jerk as well…*** You get over it, you move on, you carry on, and you remain effective…even when the world around you stops rowing, you’re keeping on…
* **I WANT to be the only rower!** What if the Lord, at the helm of the ship…and the ship is slowing…what if the Lord were to come below deck and find *every servant not working*…worse yet, every servant ***turned on each other***…**except for one.** One is there, rowing with all their might…in the midst of the chaos of all of the unfaithful servants, that one is just weeping, doing what they ought to do…***that servant will be more than a slave at that point, that servant will be a son, a brother***…and what’s even more for me personally, the Lord would then know that even if the world around me falls, *I can’t but serve Him*…for what He’s done for me. So, judge me. Disapprove me. Turn your back on me. If it’s because I have chosen to continue to serve the Lord, in time, it will be a small thing for me…and the same will be for you. The pattern continues…

1 Corinthians Chapter 4 Verse 5

* Your heart is to serve the Lord. To sincerely do His business on this earth. Faithfully you pursue glorifying God with your life…the judgement of others becomes a small thing…and similarly, naturally, ***your condescension, criticism, your own hate, your own judgment of others becomes the same thing.*** So small that its not even worth it anymore…and you move on to just simply serving God…in how you serve others as well. ***Faithful stewardship of the love, mercy and grace of God.***
* I used to want people to *see it my way.* Now I just want people to **see Jesus.** I used to want people to *think highly of me.* Now I just want people to **think highly of Jesus.** I used to want people to *listen to me,* now I just want people to **listen to Jesus.** I used to want people to *serve me*…now I just want to see them *filled with love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*…**as they serve the Lord** and manage God’s business in their lives.
* I believe in that, I am **more free** in my heart of hearts then I have ever been before and I look forward to continuing to learn and continuing to grow up in the Lord because ***I know, I sense, I am sure that I have quite the runway left***…but I’m on my way. My directive is clear, my heart is secure and steadfast…I know what it would do to me if I found one of my friends, **only one**, trusting me and rowing with me in the midst of every other friend having walked away…***and I want to honor the Lord like that…***