

The realities of serving Christ

1 Corinthians 4:6-21, p. 925

I. THE PRICE: TO SERVE CHRIST IS TO SIGN UP FOR SACRIFICE (1 CORINTHIANS 4:6-13).

- A. Perception: Ministry should bring you prestige (4:6-8).
- B. Reality: Paul's ministry brought deep suffering (4:9-13).
 - 1. Instead of leading a victory procession, serving Christ was more like a condemned man at the back (9).
 - 2. God used Paul's humiliation, not his exaltation and his weaknesses more than his strengths (10).
 - 3. God's servants may experience financial need, mistreatment, exhaustion and slander (11-13; Acts 18).

II. THE PRIVILEGE: TO SERVE CHRIST IS TO MODEL FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST (1 CORINTHIANS 4:14-21).

- A. Paul urged the Corinthians gently like a dad to imitate him (4:14-16).
- B. Paul would send Timothy to remind them what it means to follow Jesus Christ (4:17).
- C. Final warning: Paul warned he would expose and discipline his critics because ministry is marked by God's power, not arrogant talk (4:18-21).