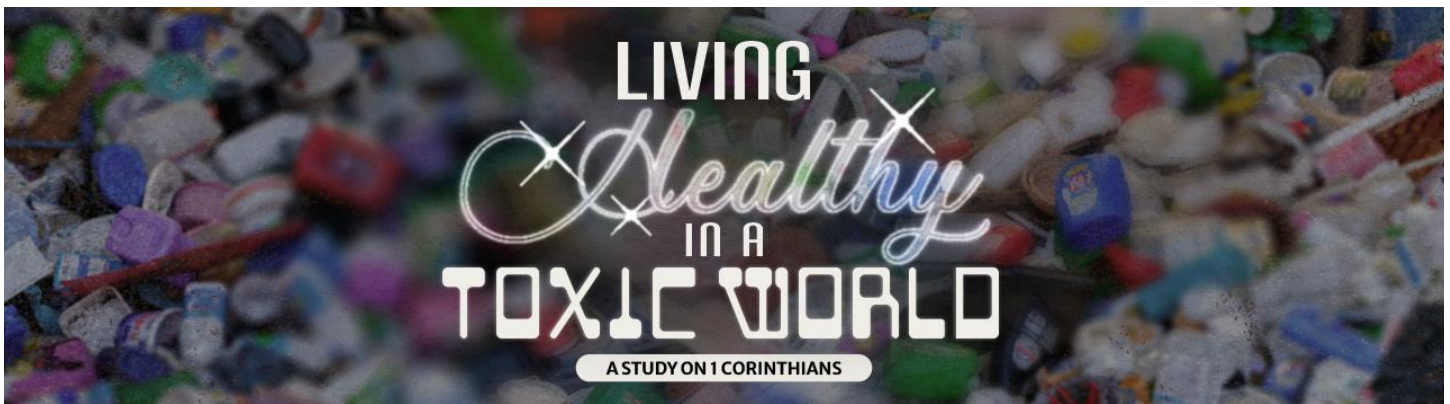




STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, August 2, 2026

Teaching: *Remember*

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1–14

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: 1 Corinthians 4:1-14

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Friday: 1 Corinthians 7:1-9

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What is your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

In a world that is constantly trying to tell us who we are, followers of Jesus must remember that our identity comes from Christ alone. The culture around us is always shaping our values, priorities, and sense of worth, but if culture defines us, it will ultimately control us. In 1 Corinthians 4, Paul reminds us that we're managers or stewards of what belongs to God. God alone is our Judge, so we don't need to live for the approval of others. And every talent, ability, and opportunity we have is a gift from Him, leaving no room for pride. All this is done because of God's power at work in us. The louder God's voice becomes in our lives, the quieter the culture's voice becomes. So, the question is—whose voice are you allowing to define your identity? The louder God gets, the quieter the culture becomes.

Questions: Icebreaker: If you could master any new musical instrument instantly, what would it be and why?

1. Read 1 Corinthians 4:1-14 together as a group. In 4:1-2, Paul used 2 metaphors to describe the role of Christian leaders. What do these 2 metaphors teach us about how Paul viewed his role and identity? (See Digging Deeper for more)
2. In verses 3-5, Paul says he isn't ultimately concerned with the opinions of others, or even his own opinion of himself. Why does Paul take this perspective? What does he believe about God's role as Judge?
3. Read verse 7. What point is Paul making when he asks, "What do you have that God hasn't given you?" How does this challenge pride and comparison?
4. In verses 8-14, Paul contrasts the Corinthians' view of themselves with the experiences of the apostles. What differences do you notice? Why do you think Paul paints such a strong contrast? (See Digging Deeper for more)

CEDAR VALLEY

Memorizing Scripture provides spiritual strength, guides your daily life, and equips you for ministry in everyday moments. For the rest of the year, we're switching things up! Each week, we encourage **you** to choose one verse from the weekly Key Scripture that stands out to you and commit it to memory. Before you choose your verse, ask God to reveal the one you most need to hide in your heart. Over time, you'll be amazed at how God brings that verse to mind—whether to strengthen and encourage you or to help you encourage someone else.

5. Pastor Neal emphasized 4 reminders that Paul highlights in this passage. Which one do you need most right now? Why? 1) Remember you're a manager 2) Remember God's the Judge; 3) Remember your gifts come from God; and 4) Remember God's power is the source.
6. Paul says that faithfulness—not success, popularity, or recognition—is what God desires from His servants. How might embracing that truth change the way you approach your work, relationships, ministry, or daily responsibilities?
7. Pastor Neal's Big So What was "The louder God gets, the quieter the culture becomes." Practically speaking, what habits help you hear God's voice more clearly throughout the week? What's one step you could take this week to intentionally listen to Him more?

DIGGING DEEPER

Question 1—"What is significant for this paragraph is the change of metaphors. In 3:5-9 the word *diakonois* was used, emphasizing the servant nature of their task under God, with secondary emphasis on the division of labor. Now the metaphor changes to that of a household. The first word, *hyperetas* ('servants [of Christ]'), is a more general term, but often refers to one who has the duties of administering the affairs of another. That this was Paul's intent is verified by the second word, *oikonomos*, which denotes a 'steward' (often a slave) who has been "entrusted with" managing a household. This is a happy change of metaphors for Paul (cf 9:17); not only is it pregnant with the notion of accountability that is in the forefront of this paragraph, but it inherently conveys the motif of delegated authority as well, the other concern of this chapter. Thus apostles are to be regarded as 'servants of Christ,' reemphasizing their humble position and their belonging to Christ alone; at the same time they are 'stewards of the mysteries of God', emphasizing both their trusted position and their accountability to God... Only the Lord (*kyrios*), the master (*kyrios*) of the house, to whom alone he is accountable may examine him and hand down a verdict (*krino*, v. 5) as to the faithfulness with which he discharges his duties."

—Dr. Gordon Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*.

Question 4—What point is Paul trying to make with the strong contrast between the apostles suffering and the Corinthians belief that they are already "reigning with God"?

Paul argues he and his fellow apostles look far more like Jesus, who fits the picture of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53:2-3. The fact that the Corinthians already believed they were reigning with God meant they believed God's kingdom had already fully arrived because they received the Spirit. But Paul makes the point that God's kingdom is a present reality (4:20), but also our future hope (6:9). Their final reign with God will be fully realized at Jesus' second coming.

In Paul's writings, there is an underlying current of what George Ladd called the "**Already and Not Yet**" **Kingdom of God**. Knowing this concept is helpful for understanding what Scripture says about suffering. The Kingdom of God can be defined as the rule or reign of God. Jesus taught that he inaugurated the rule of in his acts of power and preaching. The end of time is anticipated as the full arrival, victory, and completion of his kingdom.

Already: Right from the beginning of his ministry, Jesus announced that the kingdom is now here. The first two-thirds of each of the Gospels records his ministry, and the focus of Jesus's Spirit-empowered preaching, teaching, healing, and exorcisms centered on the kingdom of God. The important thing is that the New Testament shows that this type of ministry was not just limited to Jesus and his early disciples. Wherever the Pentecost presence of the Spirit showed up, there was life-change, whether spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, or communally.

Not Yet: While the kingdom is here, it has not come in its fullness. Christians still die; they still get sick; their relationships still struggle; they are still oppressed; they still struggle with sin. Evil continues to bear fruit in a variety of ways, thus showing the continuing influence of the kingdom of Satan and his demonic powers on earth. This is why biblical texts continue to point forward to Christ's second coming to consummate the kingdom of God.

—Taken from Blackwell, Ben and Hatchett, R. L. *Engaging Theology. A Biblical, Historical, and Practical Introduction*. Zondervan; Grand Rapids, MI. 2019. Page 254.