

Servants of Christ: Embracing a Humble Posture

1 Corinthians 4:1-21 (ESV)

Student Devotional

This 5-day devotional is here to help you reflect on Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:1–21 and get your heart ready for class. It's short, simple, and practical—perfect for starting your day with God and preparing for the lesson.

Day 1: Living as Stewards, Not Stars

Scripture:

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ...It is the Lord who judges me. (1 Corinthians 4:1, 4b, ESV)

Think About It

Imagine you're in charge of watching someone else's house while they're away. You don't own it, but you have the responsibility to keep it safe, tidy, and ready for the owner's return. That's the picture Paul paints for us as "stewards." We don't run the show—God does. Our job is to faithfully handle the resources and opportunities He gives. But too often, we slip into acting like the owner, seeking praise and attention for ourselves. What would your life look like if you truly believed every talent, every minute, and every platform you have belongs to God?

Pray It

Lord, open my eyes to see that I'm not the owner but the caretaker of all You've entrusted to me. Keep me from seeking the spotlight. Instead, teach me to faithfully serve You and point others to Your goodness.

Do It

Do a quick "ownership check." Think about one resource you often treat like it's yours alone—time, money, or a specific skill. This week, use that resource in a way that honors God and benefits someone else.

Day 2: Deflating Pride with Gratitude

Scripture:

What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7, ESV)

Think About It

Have you ever felt proud after acing an exam or playing a sport really well? It's natural to feel satisfaction, but Paul reminds us that even our "natural" abilities come from God. Our culture often preaches a "self-made" mindset, telling us to celebrate our achievements as if we're the ultimate source of success. But when we realize that every gift, opportunity, and success reflects God's generosity, our pride begins to crumble. Instead of boasting about what we've accomplished, we become grateful for how God has blessed us—turning "Look what I did!" into "Look what God enabled me to do."

Pray It

God, forgive me when I act like I've earned everything on my own. Help me see that every good thing—my talents, relationships, and successes—flows from Your grace. Replace my pride with humble gratitude.

Do It

Take a moment each day to list 3–5 things you're thankful for. They could be big (like passing a major test) or small (like a friend's encouraging text). Then say a quick prayer of thanks, recognizing God as the giver of all good gifts.

Day 3: Embracing Hardship with Grace

Scripture:

When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. ...We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world. (1 Corinthians 4:12–13, ESV)

Think About It

Paul's life wasn't glamorous. He faced insults, physical hardships, and ongoing criticism—all because he followed Jesus. And yet, instead of giving up or snapping back, he chose to bless his attackers and lean deeper into God's strength. In our modern world, it's tempting to fight fire with fire—shaming those who shame us or complaining loudly when we're misunderstood. But Paul's example points us to a different path: respond with prayer, kindness, and unwavering hope. How might your daily struggles—maybe a conflict at home, a difficult classmate, or online negativity—be an opportunity for you to show Christ's love instead of retaliating?

Pray It

Father, I don't want to repay hurt with more hurt. Show me how to bless those who mock or misunderstand me. Give me the resilience to stand firm in my faith while extending grace to those who oppose it.

Do It

Identify one situation where you feel unfairly treated or stressed. Plan a grace-filled response—maybe a kind gesture, a patient conversation, or a simple prayer for that person. Let your reaction reflect God's mercy rather than your frustration.

Day 4: Modeling Christlike Care

Scripture:

I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ...I urge you, then, be imitators of me. (1 Corinthians 4:14, 16, ESV)

Think About It

Being a spiritual mentor or role model isn't about showing off perfection; it's about pointing others to Jesus through genuine care and honesty. Paul saw himself like a father to the Corinthian believers—correcting them when needed, but always with love at the core. Think of the people in your life who look up to you: younger siblings, peers at church, or friends who respect your opinions. They learn not just from what you say, but from how you live when no one's watching. Are you demonstrating the selfless, kind, and humble love of Christ, or do you only wear a “churchy” face on Sundays?

Pray It

Lord, thank You for the mentors in my life who guide me. Help me also be a loving example to those who watch me—whether they're younger in age or faith. Let my everyday actions and attitudes reflect Your heart.

Do It

Reach out to someone who might benefit from your support—perhaps a younger believer or a friend who's struggling. Offer to read a passage of Scripture together, discuss life issues, or simply pray with them. Show them what Christlike care looks like in real life.

Day 5: Power vs. Talk

Scripture

For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power. (1 Corinthians 4:20, ESV)

Think About It

It's easy to say we believe in Jesus, post a nice quote online, or give a polished testimony—but does our everyday life back it up? Paul confronts Christians in Corinth who talked a big game yet lacked real spiritual transformation. True faith shows up in how we treat our parents, how we handle conflicts, and whether we can resist peer pressure. Words alone don't change hearts—God's power does. When the Holy Spirit is truly at work, there's a marked difference in our attitudes, habits, and relationships. So ask yourself: Are you satisfied with just talking about faith, or do you really want to experience God's transforming power day by day?

Pray It

Jesus, I don't want a faith that's just words. Fill me with Your Spirit so that my actions, priorities, and relationships showcase Your power. May people see in me the genuine change only You can bring.

Do It

Look for one area where your actions need to catch up with your words—maybe being patient with a sibling, showing integrity at work, or forgiving someone who hurt you. Ask the Holy Spirit for the strength to make a real change, then take a concrete step to live out your faith.

You're Ready for Class!

Over these five days, you've explored how to live as faithful servants—relying on God for everything, responding to hardship with grace, and backing up your words with transformed actions. Come to class ready to share where you've seen God at work in your own life and how you're growing in humility and commitment. Remember: it's not about **our** glory—it's about pointing everyone to **Jesus**, the true King.

Before We Gather

- When you think of the word “servant,” what positive or negative images come to mind, and why do you think our culture often resists a servant mindset?
- Think about a time you were tempted to evaluate someone's ministry based on numbers, popularity, or outward success. How could focusing on faithfulness and God's ultimate judgment have changed your perspective?
- Recall a moment when you felt superior to others because of your knowledge, talent, or resources. How can Paul's question — “What do you have that you did not receive?” — help you adopt a humbler perspective?
- Think about a situation—maybe at work, school, or even in church—where you felt unfairly treated or dismissed for your faith. How might Paul's example of enduring persecution with grace reshape your response?

- Think of someone you've spiritually mentored or someone who looks up to you. What actions or attitudes in your own life would you want them to imitate, and how might you intentionally show them a deeper expression of Christ's love?
- Why do you think some churches and Christian cultures fall into putting leaders on pedestals? How can focusing on servanthood prevent that?
- In what specific areas of life might you be tempted to boast or compare? What steps can you take to ensure gratitude to God remains at the center?
- Have you observed Christian communities that talk a lot about faith but show little real transformation? What practical evidence would you expect in a church living in God's power?