

1 Corinthians, Part 1

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I. Introduction.

A. The husband should nourish and cherish his wife's gifts. (Ephesians 5)

B. Text: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.

II. Privileges of the ministry.

A. It is a privilege to be a minister, which is an "under-rower."

1. We are "under-rowers" of Christ.

2. The responsibility of the officer is to apply the instructions to Christ. (Matthew 5::25)

B. It is a privilege to be a steward of God's mysteries.

1. The mystery is the obedience of faith. (1 Corinthians 13, Romans 16:25)

2. The mystery is the change that will occur. (1 Corinthians 15:21)

III. Pressures of the ministry.

A. Congregational pressure.

1. The pressure of manipulation.

2. The pressure of adulation.

3. The pressure of antagonism.

B. Societal pressure. There is a pressure to subscribe to the consensus.

C. Personal pressure.

IV. Perspectives of the ministry.

A. Discount much congregational pressure.

1. It is often limited in understanding.

2. It is often exclusively subjective. God is not just here to meet our needs. God is not there to meet our needs--he is there to be God.

3. It is often more emotional than rational.

B. Discontinue much personal pressure.

1. Personal pressure is not capable of accurate assessment. Beware of arbitrary criteria.

2. It is often counterproductive. We often become more concerned with evaluating ourselves than the work of the community.

C. Divine pressure.

1. This is the pressure that we should be concerned about.

2. The Lord is the one who judges.

3. When we subject ourselves to this bondage we find freedom.

4. God will expose the murky things, examine the motivational things, and exalt the magnificent things.

V. Pleasures of the ministry.

A. Knowing that people are trying to understand.

B. People are committed to undergird.

C. People will refuse to undercut us.

Application questions:

1. Why should pastors be careful about congregational pressures?

2. In what ways are many Christian leaders caving to societal pressures today?

3. When have you experienced divine pressure? What did you learn?
