

“PAUL’S MINDSET FOR A  
GROUNDED LIFE”  
1 Corinthians 4:1-5

## INTRODUCTION

The better part of this chapter has Paul contrasting himself with the Corinthians. His life is an example to them and others, such as the Thessalonians and Philippians. Paul was in essence, a spiritual father to them.

Even though Paul was often mistreated and experienced persecution, and yet persevered. The text in 2 Corinthians 11 lists the many ways in which he suffered in the name of Christ. The outstanding quality that Paul had...he was grounded in the Lord and resilient!

## UNDERROWERS

Being a servant of Jesus is like being an “under rower” on a ship. (That’s the Greek word for “servant”, *hyperetes*, in verse 1). The ancient trireme ships had several levels with a crew of up to 420. There were 300 oarsmen, a deck crew of 20 and 100 marines. As an oarsman there are several things to make note of: **1)** you were committed for life – usually chained to that position, **2)** you had to row according to the beat, **3)** you had to row together – 3 men to an oar, **4)** you had to trust the captain – you couldn’t see what was going on outside the ship, and **5)** in a sense, you were invisible – you were hidden away on a lower deck, and the captain received the honor!

## HAVING THE RIGHT MINDSET

When Paul thought of himself as a servant of the Lord, it inoculated him from an attitude of entitlement. He did not complain that he didn’t deserve the treatment that he received. He didn’t quit because some didn’t appreciate his efforts or abilities. Jesus bought us and owns us. If he desires us to go through this situation, what is that to us?

## FAITHFULNESS

As stewards we are entrusted with responsibility. Jesus is the Master of what we do. We are not required to be brilliant, innovative, or talented. Our Lord is looking for faithfulness, reliability and commitment! Paul didn’t stay in Corinth because he wanted to be fulfilled by them. He stayed because there was a higher reason, Jesus required faithfulness on his part!

## THE CRITICS

There were those who criticized Paul. “And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.” **2 Corinthians 12:15** NKJV. Paul viewed their criticism as being insignificant. What Jesus thought mattered the most! Of course there are some human opinions that are more valuable than others, such as those of mature, spiritual believers. When you serve, however, ignore the carnal critics, as they will only bring you down. We need to be careful of our *own opinion*, since we don’t always have an objective view of what we do. Human opinion comes to naught because Jesus is the Judge!

## CONSIDER

In **1 Chronicles 21**, David knew that he would suffer consequences for his sin of pride. Given the choice, David chose to suffer the consequences of God rather than of man. “Please let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hands of man” **1 Chronicles 21:13** NKJV. Simply put, trust that God will handle things!

Paul was unappreciated and so will you be. Just focus on being faithful. Don’t give up! Remember that Jesus is coming. That is our motivation! We want to hear the words, “Well done good and faithful servant!”

## PRAY .....

- that we would truly be an under rower for the Lord, not just a critic of others who are rowing.
- that the Lord would grant us a spirit of resiliency in service to Jesus.
- that we would learn the lessons of past mistakes
- for our VBS outreach in July.
- for a good response to our church outreach in Canandaigua in August.