

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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1 CORINTHIANS 3-4

There's an old American folk song called "Billy Boy." Charming Billy is in love with a girl who is apparently too young to leave home. When you sing the chorus, "she's a young thing and cannot leave her mother," you get the impression Billy's girl is still a teenager. But listen to the lyrics, "How old is she, Billy Boy, Billy Boy? How old is she, charming Billy? Three times six, and four times seven, twenty-eight and eleven - she's a young thing and cannot leave her mother." Billy's girl is not such a young thing after all. *Add it up...* The gal is actually 85 years old. All of a sudden you're concerned about Billy's girl. This is a folk song about a dysfunctional personality. By the time you're 85 you're expected to be grown up and moved out. You're no longer a child, but an adult. And this was Paul's concern in regards to the Church at Corinth. At this stage in the life of the church Paul expected them to show some maturity. Instead, they were acting like "babes." They were legitimate believers, but there was some dysfunction. They weren't growing up. Paul coins a term to describe them. He calls them "carnal."

Chapter 3 begins, "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." In chapter 2 Paul divided humanity into two groups - the natural man and the spiritual man. The natural man does not know Christ. Man is a sinner by nature. We're born alienated from God. Left to ourselves we spiral to destruction. Sin and rebellion – ignorance and prejudice – *just come natural for a natural man.* But the spiritual man is animated by God. The Holy Spirit dwells within him. He also will sin at times, but it grieves him because it goes against his new nature. Deep inside he has a desire to please God and to love others.

But now in Chapter 3 Paul brings up another type of person. He calls him the "carnal man." The Latin word "carne" means "flesh." I think about this when I eat a bowl of Kathy's chili. She puts meat – lots of flesh – in her chili – which makes it "chili con carne" or "chili with meat." "Carne" describes the believer who lives oriented toward the flesh. He possesses God's Spirit, but has yet to let the Spirit possess him. He hasn't allowed the Holy Spirit to shape and color his outlook. His life is governed by natural, sinful appetites. He has God's Spirit, but lives as if he doesn't. Paul refers to such a person as a *carnal Christian* – a "babe in Christ."

And carnal Christians show the same behavior you'd see in the nursery..

If they don't get their way, or aren't the center of attention, they cry...

They can't stand on their own, and need other people to prop them up.

They lack discernment, and become vulnerable to deception.

Because of a short attention span they get easily distracted.

And they can't feed themselves. Their only nourishment comes from the pastor and their church.

Realize, if you've were born again just a few weeks ago this is understandable. You're a babe in Christ. It takes time to mature. But if you've been a Christian for years and you're still carnal, something has gone wrong. There's a dysfunction. You need to *grow up* and fast!

Nowhere in Scripture do you see playpens and bibs in heaven. Along the way from earth to heaven God expects His people to grow up and mature. My expectant daughter-in-law got an interesting gift at her baby shower - a “pee-pee teepee” - a device that aids in changing a baby boy’s diaper. A washable cloth cone caps off a certain part of the male anatomy. This protects the diaper-changer from being fired on by an uncontrolled bladder. I’m sure a regular diaper-changer’s first priority is to help that boy get his bladder under control. And this is God’s immediate goal for us. Don’t be a carnal Christian. Live under the influence and control of the Holy Spirit. This is why God doesn’t take us to heaven the moment we’re saved. God leaves us in a wicked world. He subjects us to trials and temptation. The resistance training builds endurance and teaches us how to trust Him!

Paul tells the Corinthians in verse 2, “I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able...” Here’s another characteristic of a carnal Christian - he’s drinking milk when he needs to be eating solid food. It’s cute to watch a newborn sucking a bottle, but an 18 year-old still on Similac is a problem. And this was the issue with the Corinthians. They had an immature approach to Scripture. They were sucking on the basics, rather than chewing on meatier truths. Hebrews 5:14 tells us, “For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age...”

A babe reads *Bible stories*. The mature studies *Bible doctrine*.
A babe wants to *know about God*. The mature seeks to *know God*.
A babe marvels at *what God does*. The mature worships *who God is*.
A babe learns *biblical principles*. The mature gains a *biblical perspective*.
A babe fills his mind with *facts*. The mature fills his heart with *love*.

Again, it’s okay to be a babe for a season. But too many believers stay there. They never graduate kindergarten, and grow to be a spiritual person. Paul says to the Corinthians, “for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” Notice, another mark of carnality is friction and division. You expect to see quarrels, and fighting, and biting, and selfishness in the nursery, but not in the sanctuary. Babies squabble, not mature adults.

But Corinth’s worship services looked like the toddler’s class. Paul writes, “For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not carnal?” Kids fight over trivial, selfish stuff. Listen on the playground. “My dad is stronger than your dad...” “No way, my dad can whip your dad!” Little kids take pride in their heroes. And this was the situation in the Corinthian church. The believers polarized around their favorite pastors. Understand, this is why I’m deliberately nondenominational. I think it’s enough to simply label yourself “**Christian.**” To emphasize any other tag, or distinctive, or association only diminishes the importance of our connection to Christ. We’re *Calvary Chapel*, but we don’t run around calling ourselves that – first and foremost, we’re *followers of Jesus*. Speaking of denominations...

Know how many Southern Baptists it takes to change a light bulb?

At last count 16 million, but they can't agree if it needs changing.

How many Mennonites does it take to change a light bulb?

Eventually about five, but they can get along fine without it

How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb?

Three. One to do it, one to bless it, and one to pour the sherry.

How many Nazarenes does it take to change a light bulb?

Eleven. One to change it and 10 to organize the supper that follows.

How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?

They're not sure, but there's a committee studying the issue.

How many Amish does it take to change a light bulb?

What's a light bulb?

How many Church of Christ does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but if anyone else tries to do it, the light won't come on.

How many Methodist does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but let's not offend anybody by the change.

How many Catholics does it take to change a light bulb?

Nine. One to change it, and 8 to sell raffle tickets on the old one.

How many Charismatics does it take to change a light bulb?

Three. One to do it, and two to bind the spirit of darkness.

And finally, how many CC guys does it take to change a light bulb?

Only one, but he never shows up at church on time.

Every church has its own flavor and style - and that's okay. I believe God creates a *wide array of churches* to reach a *wide variety of people*. What's wrong is when churches accentuate their differences as if they were better than other churches. We need *cooperation not competition!* We need to recall that despite our difference we're all one Body.

Verse 5 poses the question, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?" *Why get excited about the messenger?* It's the Lord Jesus who died to save us, not His messenger. Yes, the messenger delivered the message, but the Lord equipped him, and sent him, and even softened your heart. It's the Lord Himself - not his messenger - that's responsible for our salvation.

Paul says, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase." In Corinth, Paul had planted, and Apollos watered - but in Ephesus, the roles were reversed. Apollos planted, and Paul watered. God uses us to touch different people at different points in their life. I've spent years with folk sowing seeds and watering them in prayer. Then I bump into another guy for the first time and get the opportunity to lead him to Christ. God uses us in different ways at different times. But always, without exception, it's God who supplies the miracle of life.

An agricultural school in Iowa studied the ingredients needed to grow 100 bushels of corn on an acre of land. Here's a partial list, "Four million pounds of water, 6800 pounds of oxygen, 5200 pounds of carbon, 160 pounds of nitrogen, 125 pounds of potassium, 75 pounds of sulphur, etc." They estimated that less than 5% of what was needed to produce a crop of corn is supplied by the farmer. *The same is true of the spiritual harvest...* Compared to the work of the Holy Spirit, our role in evangelism is minor. We can sow the Word, but we can't make

grow in the heart. Nothing happens eternally or spiritually unless the Spirit of God is involved. It's "*God who gives the increase*" - and it's God who deserves all the glory!

Verse 8, "*Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*" We're all on the same team - working toward the same goal – serving the same Boss. And the Boss will reward us not by the size of our contribution, or the sphere of our influence, but whether we are faithful in the task He assigns. We don't get to choose our job. He chooses for us. We're to be faithful.

Look at how Chapter 3 breaks down... In verses 1-4 we're *God's family*, and our emphasis is *maturity*... In verses 5-9 we're *God's field*, and our objective is *activity*. Now in verses 9-23 we're *God's Temple*, and our concern is *glory*. A family with maturity involves discipleship... A field with activity requires evangelism... And a temple for God's glory necessitates worship...

Vs. 10, "*According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.*" Any architect knows the span, and strength, and height of a building depends on the density of its foundation. The foundation is the most important part of the structure. And the same is true with spiritual construction - believers and churches. Verse 11, "*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*" Here's the solid foundation on which any ministry is built, "*Jesus Christ.*" Anchor a ministry to *a social cause, or pet doctrine, or spiritual phenomena, or political objective, or style of worship, or exciting personality* - and you're building on a shaky foundation. If you want the ministry to last, build it so it points people to Jesus!

"*Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.*" When you go to erect a building you can't just slap up a structure – you have to comply to the local building codes. And God also has building codes. In serving God there're guidelines to follow. I grew up in a church with a domineering pastor. He pushed people around to get his way. One day my mom and I were discussing it, and she defended him by saying, "*Yea, but he did lead a lot of people to Christ.*" That's when God spoke to me through my own words. I replied, "*But mom, in ministry the ends never justifies the means.*" And indeed it doesn't. That's what Paul is teaching us here. One day our works will be judged...

The Bible speaks of three Judgments... In Matthew 25 the nations are gathered to be judged in the Valley of Decision... In Revelation 20 the lost and unbelievers are tried and condemned at God's Great White Throne... But believers come to the *Bema Seat* - the *Judgment Seat of Christ*. This is what Paul speaks of here. Unbelievers are judged by their works, whether good or evil. Christians are saved by faith, not by works. But our works of service after we're saved will be tested. God will reveal "*of what sort*" they were. God will expose the motive behind our acts of service... The times you taught Sunday School grumbling because you had to get up early to babysit a bunch of snotty-nosed kids... the time you ushered, and hurried folks along so you could get home and watch football... Those acts of service will be like "*wood, hay, straw*" in the fire. They look so impressive going in, but the fire of God's holiness burns them to ashes. Whereas, the time you jumped out of bed eager to love the little ones with the love of Jesus... the time you led worship with a smile, and put out some extra effort - when those acts of service pass through God's holiness they'll come through un-singed - like "*gold, silver, precious stones.*"

Verse 14, "If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." We're saved by Jesus' blood. Our soul escapes judgment, because Jesus Christ passed through the fire for us... but our service, our ministry, will one day be tested and tried...

"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are." In the OT Temple the priests would never defile or pollute what was dedicated to God. This principle carries over to the NT. The church is God's Temple - and church-work like Temple-work should never pollute God's people with a sour attitude, or jealousy of another ministry, or manipulation, or fear... Christian ministry should promote holiness, and bring glory to God!

Verse 18, "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "*He catches the wise in their own craftiness*"; and again, "*The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile*." Don't become proud of man-made philosophies and speculations. None of us are superior to each other. Up against God's wisdom we're all bozos.

"Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come - all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The splinter groups in Corinth laid an exclusive claim on their favorite teacher. Yet God's family is a "fellowship." The Greek word is "koinonia" - it means "to hold all things in common." The blessings of Christ are *yours* as long as they're *ours*. Christianity is all about sharing – not hoarding. All that belongs to God belongs to those in Christ... we like that! But follow the logic - that means all that belongs to me belongs to you. There's no private property in the spiritual kingdom Christ is building.

Author Alan Redpath writes, "I love to go out into the country and remember that it is my Father's world, and because it is His, it is mine. I may never own legal title to an inch of it, but it is all mine in the Lord Jesus." Every sunset, every snowflake, every rainbow belongs to you - if you belong to God. All that belongs to God is shared among His children.

Chapter 4, "Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Here Paul describes a Christian minister in two ways - "*servants of Christ*" and "*stewards of the mysteries of God*." The Greek word translated, "*servant*" means "under rower." Slaves were chained to the oars in the galley ships of Rome. Two columns of men rowed to the cadence of the overseer. He kept the pace by using a whip. These slaves had no say in the speed the boat traveled or how hard they worked. Their only job was to follow orders... Welcome to the Christian ministry!

If you want to be involved in ministry at any level – the entry level job... the middle level job... the upper level job... is that of "*servant*." In our culture somehow the word "*minister*" gained an exalted status, but God has never called anyone to be a *star*, or a *celebrity*, or a *sensation* - just a *servant*. The Assistant Pastor for years at CC Costa Mesa was Pastor Romaine. Romaine would tell young pastors, "*Serve the Lord as if you're doing it in your underwear*." If you're in your skibbies you're not going to want people noticing you! The idea will be to just serve and get out of the spotlight.

We are "*servants of Christ*," but also "*stewards of the mysteries of God*." A "*steward*" was a household manager - a trusted slave put in charge of his Master's house, and expected to manage it as would His Master. Likewise, God entrusts us with incredible spiritual resources. He expects us to handle them *wisely* not *wastefully*. And note the steward's one priority, verse 2, "*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful*." Not *successful* necessarily, but *faithful*. We live in a world fascinated with success and its symbols. Even in church circles often the worth of a person's ministry is measured by *budgets, and buildings, and data bases*. Hey, you can have great numbers – loads of nickels and noses - and still not be pleasing to God. *Just look at the Mormons...* Don't you be deceived. True success in ministry is determined by one quality – are you "*found faithful?*" Have you been obedient to what God called you to do, or not?

When Mount Vesuvius erupted over the Roman city of Pompeii it encased the cityscape under a blanket of lava. Years later when the ruins were examined a sentinel was found - hardened in the lava - still standing by his gate. Even in the chaos of the eruption the man never left his post. Like a good steward, when the smoke cleared he was "*found faithful*." This should be our goal as *servants and stewards* of Jesus Christ!

Verse 3, "*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court*." Evidently, critics in Corinth were accusing Paul of being unfaithful. Here he answers the charges against him in three ways...

First, Paul says, "*In fact, I do not even judge myself...*" Notice, he doesn't even judge himself. Rather than *rake himself over the coals*, he *rests in God's grace*. Rather than *look inward* Paul *looks upward*. I use to run with a group of Christians who were into self-examination. They spent great time and energy searching their heart for hidden sins. In retrospect their effort was a waste. This is *not* how Paul dealt with his sin. Instead of *digging for sin*, Paul *reached for the heavens*. He focused on knowing Christ, and trusted the Lord to bring to light the flaws he needed to address. Realize *too much introspection will cause depression*. Spend all your time *looking for sin* - *and there's always more than enough to find* - and you'll have very little time left to *look to Jesus*. Faith grows when we get our eyes off ourselves and fixed on Jesus.

Second, Paul comments, "*For I know of nothing against myself* (in other words "*my conscience is clean*"), *yet I am not justified by this...*" God created the conscience as a moral compass. It's a tool to help us discern right from wrong. But the conscience can deceive us at times. Proverbs 14:12 warns us, "*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death*." We're vulnerable to blind spots. Sin is like a crumb in your beard, without a mirror, you're the last one to see it! This is why for Paul Jesus was his only Judge. "*But He who judges me is the Lord*." Paul didn't answer to the critics in Corinth – Jesus was his Judge.

Third, Paul realized all meaningful judgments won't be made until Jesus returns. Verse 5, "*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God*." Here's a danger in casting judgment on another person. In the here and now, rarely do we see the whole picture. Only the Lord has all the facts. I recall a couple that came for pre-marital counseling. When it surfaced that they were living together I hammered away at the idea of a separation. Suddenly the girl bolted from the room in tears... It turned out a few weeks earlier the same apartment had been broken into and she'd been raped. Her boyfriend was sleeping on the couch for her protection. I had to apologize for jumping to a conclusion before I knew the whole story. Only Jesus can read a person's motive. We need to leave the judgment of a servant up to his or her Master. Only at Jesus' return will hearts be revealed and motives disclosed. Until that day, we shouldn't jump the gun.

"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think

beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.” Here’s the root cause of the schisms in Corinth – it was pride! The easiest way to lift up myself is by putting down a brother. By making *you look bad* I make *myself look good*. Pride is what causes division. Those who felt an allegiance to Apollos tried to put down Paul. And the Corinthians who felt loyal to Paul tried pick apart Apollos. It was all pride. Notice the cure Paul suggest for this unbridled judging, “*learn... not to think beyond what is written...*” Here’s our boundaries – if it’s not in written in the Word – if you can’t point to chapter and verse – *if it’s just a question of style, or opinion, or taste, or tradition* – then you got no business judging! Just because you don’t like it - doesn’t make it wrong.

Verse 7, “*For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?*” All that the Corinthians had received from God was a gift of His grace. It’s not as if they had earned any of their blessings. Why then were they now taking personal pride in what was a gift? It reminds me of a pastor who asked his friend, “*Will you pray that I stay humble?*” His friend replied, “*First, tell me, what do you have to be proud about?*” The answer for all of us is zilch. All we have is a gift from God.

In verse 8 Paul reeks with sarcasm. It angered the Corinthians when they first read these words. Paul mocks these arrogant believers, “*You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us - and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!*” The Corinthians were acting like royalty - flaunting their privileges in Christ - but they ignored the responsibility that came with those privileges.

“*For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.*” The word “*spectacle*” was well known to Roman citizens. The Emperor managed the masses by keeping their *stomachs full* and *minds entertained*. “*Bread and circuses*” was the Caesar’s formula. The various forms of Roman entertainment were known as “*spectacles.*” Amphitheatres were built to host various athletic competitions. Chariot races were held in Rome’s Circus Maximus – the Talladega of the day. At times the Roman Coliseum was flooded in order to stage mock naval battles. At other times gladiators fought to the death. The favorite fix for the bloodthirsty Romans was to toss Christian leaders to the hungry lions. Paul points out that while the Corinthians were passing frivolous judgment on each other, and causing dissension in the ranks - there were other believers in the Church who are paying a steep price to follow Jesus. The prideful Corinthians were making a carnal scene. While God was focused on those apostles who were being abused as Roman “*spectacles.*”

In verse 10 Paul contrasts persecuted apostles with prideful Corinthians. “*We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!*” How did the mighty Corinthians become so wise, and strong, and honorable, while the apostles – men that *God honored* and appointed as head of the church - men who sacrificed life for Jesus’ sake - became fools. Could it be the Corinthians were judging success by worldly standards?

In the flick, “*Field of Dreams,*” Ray Cansella hears a voice in the cornfield telling him to plow under his crop and build a baseball diamond. He builds it, and invisible players from a bygone era practice baseball on his field... Of course, his extended family thinks he’s a certifiable nut. No one trusts his actions. They think he’s reckless. Everybody calls him a fool. But as a Christian I also base life-altering decisions on a voice nobody else hears. I’ve taken economic risk to follow that voice. I’ve seen God in action when no one else saw Him. Am I ready to be seen by others the way Ray’s family and neighbors saw him? Am I willing to be a “*fool for Christ?*”

The Corinthians were proud, and worried about image. They wanted to be seen as wise, strong, honorable. In contrast, Paul could care less about his image. He was willing to be view as a “fool” if it was for Jesus’ sake!”

Verse 11, “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.” Remember, a steward's job is not to be rich and comfortable - but **faithful** - even if it requires suffering. “And we labor, working with our own hands.” While in Corinth Paul met Aquila and Priscilla. Together the three friends made tents to pay the bills. Paul worked a job to support his own ministry while in Corinth.

“Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat.” Paul was a fighter. He never rolled over, but struck back. *But it was the way he fought...* He responded to attacks with love – he resisted opposition with increased commitment - when falsely accused he retaliated with the truth.

Paul says, “We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.” Literally, “we’re treated like the scum of the earth.” Here’s how erroneous human judgments can be. The folks God crowns in heaven are treated by this world as scraps for the garbage disposal.

Verse 14, “I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn *you*. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have many fathers*; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.” Paul was grieved that the Corinthians listened to his critics, and didn’t trust in the faithfulness of his ministry. Paul was the one who led them to Christ. He was their spiritual father. They’ll have 10,000 teachers in their lifetime, but only one spiritual parent. This is true of all believers. The pastor or friend who led us to Christ - the church where we were saved - always has a special place in our hearts. You’ll enjoy other churches and teachers, but you only have one parent. This made the Corinthians’ doubts about Paul all the more painful. It’s true, love always flows downward. Our kids don’t love us as much as we love them. And the same is true spiritually. Just because we love and invest in someone else’s life doesn’t mean they’ll always return the favor.

Paul tells the Corinthians in verse 16, “Therefore I urge you, imitate me.” What a powerful statement! Paul is not like some parents, who say, “do as I say, not as I do...” Let me say to all parents... *those words go in one ear and out of the other for the person you love*. Paul led by example!

Verse 17, “For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord...” Not all of Paul’s love had gone unreciprocated. Timothy stood by Paul. He was a “faithful son in the Lord.” “Who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.” They had the attitude, “while the cat is away the rats will play.” Paul is warning... *He’s coming for a visit and he’ll set things right!*

Verse 19, “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God *is not in word but in power*.” When Paul arrives he’ll add some **pow** to his preaching! He’s a tough hombre. He’s not afraid to lace on the gloves. I’m not sure what exactly he had in mind, but it sounds like he’s prepared to cram a little humble pie down some haughty Corinthian throats. When Paul hits town he’s going to demand an accounting of the church’s attitude and accusations. It’ll be *put up or shut up*

time for the Corinthians.

Paul wants his return to Corinth to be a happy reunion, but it's their choice... The chapter closes with a question, verse 21, "What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?" Paul's approach to the Corinthians will depend on their attitude toward him. Sometimes *discipleship* requires *discipline*. It takes love and a firm hand. When my boys were little tikes there were night's when it was a fight. They wouldn't go to bed. I'd try to reason with them to a point, but they knew I meant business when I took off my belt... Paul is taking off his belt. Let me close with a line from a country song, "Sometimes you're the windshield. Sometimes you're the bug." Paul isn't threatening, he's just telling the Corinthians... They'll be the bug if they don't stop bugging him.