



## I Corinthians chapter 4 : Sources of identity

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1



## Tonight's topics

- How to view leaders (1-2)
- Three judgements - which one counts? (3-5)
- Accurate self-image - who are you? (6-13)
- Role models - who to follow? (14-17)
- The ultimate test - would we pass? (18-21)
- But first ...

2



## Last week's homework - 1

- Learn Proverbs 3:5-6 by heart ...

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

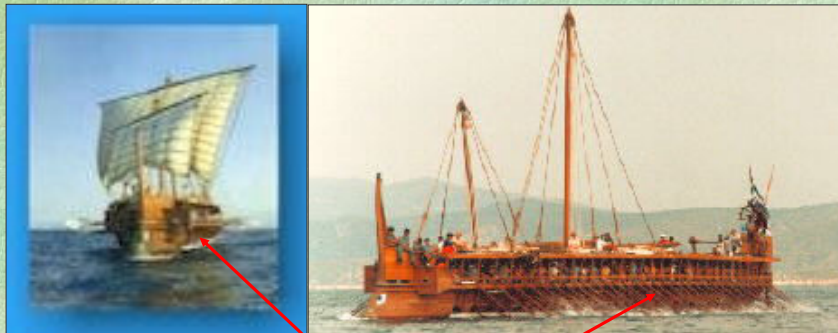
**Alternatively** : Trust God from the bottom of your heart; don't try to figure out everything on your own. Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go; he's the one who will keep you on track.  
*("The Message")*

3



## Last week's homework - 2

- What links I Corinthians 4:1-2 with a Roman galley?



Paul is here

4



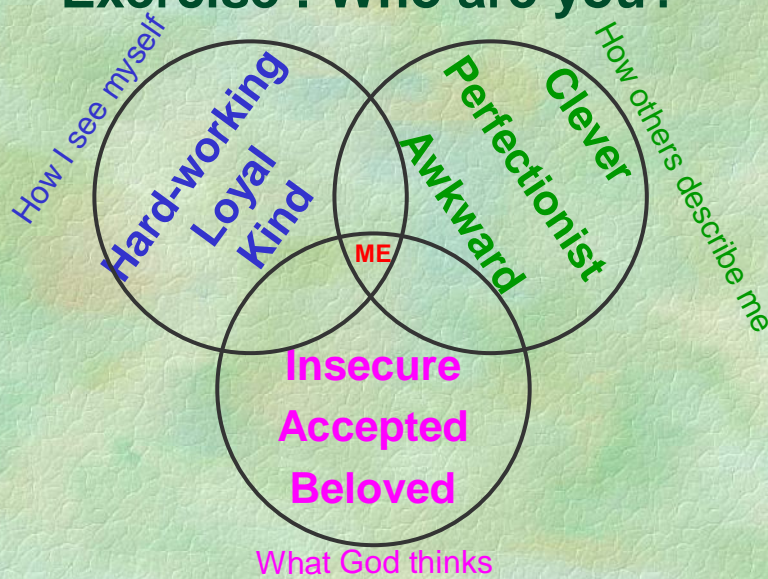
## What is a leader? (1-2)

- Paul says :
  - *hyperetai*
    - “under-rowers”
    - manual labourers
  - *oikonomos*
    - “stewards”
    - trustworthy

5



## Exercise : Who are you?



6




## Three judgements (3-5)

1. Judged by **you** at “the day of man”
  - a “Very Small Thing”
2. Judged by **my own conscience**
  - unreliable & irrelevant
3. Judged by **the Lord** when he comes
  - the final verdict
  - “the time”

- God’s judgement
  - exposes (John 3:19-21) & discloses (Romans 2:15-16)
  - leads to the sentence (Matthew 25:31-46)





7



## Self-image ground rules (6-7)

- Learn from us the *Not beyond what is written*
  - ✓ base everything on Scripture
- Don’t get “*phusioo*”
  - ✓ inflated ego & self-importance
- Don’t show **favouritism**
  - ✓ God is not partial
- Everything is a gift of **grace**
  - ✓ can’t boast (Jeremiah 9:23-24)



8




## Accurate self-image (8-13)

- Are we “fat rich kings”? (8)
  - ✧ see Revelation 3:17
- Paul’s self-image (9-13) :
  - ✧ exhibited ... sentenced ... spectacle
  - ✧ fools, weak, no reputation, hungry & thirsty, poor, homeless, reviled, persecuted, slandered
  - ✧ refuse & off-scourings (“the scum of the earth”)
- Paul’s response (12-13) :
  - ✧ work hard, bless, endure, conciliate



9



## Why am I telling you this? (14-17)

- v14 - Not to **shame** you but to **correct** you
- v15 - Not as a **guide** but a **father**
- v16 - So **be like me** ...
  - ✧ *mimetes*
  - ✧ dangerous egotist? (see I Corinthians 11:1)
- v17 - Everyone else does it too!

10



## “You’re just like ...”

- Exercise (in pairs) :
  - ✓ Who is your role model?
  - ✓ What do you know about Paul that you would like to copy?
  - ✓ Which one of your characteristics would you least like anyone to copy?
  - ✓ What one thing would you most want someone else to copy from you?

11



## Paul is coming ... (18-21)

- To find out : **talk** or **power** ??
- The kingdom of God
  - ✓ “*wherever his rule & reign is recognised & submitted to*”
  - ✓ not **talk** (*logos* = theory)
  - ✓ but **power** (*dunamis* = explosion of the supernatural)
- What would Paul find here?

12



## Summary

- What is the basis for *my identity* ?
  - ✓ Whose **judgement** counts?
    - Other people? My conscience? God's view?
  - ✓ "*Fat rich king*"?
    - Self-satisfied, or desperately needing grace?
  - ✓ Who is my **role model**?
    - Copy someone who is copying Christ
  - ✓ **The ultimate test** :
    - **talk** or **power**?

13